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ABSTRACT

This final report describes activities and accomplishments of the Whole Schooling Research Project, a collaborative, qualitative study of inclusive education and its relationship with exemplary teaching and schooling practices in 16 schools in Michigan and Wisconsin from 1998 through 2002. The study focused on the application of five principles of whole schooling which are to: (1) empower citizens in a democracy; (2)include all children; (3) engage in authentic multi-level teaching; (4) build community and support learning; and (5) partner with families and the community. It examined the relationship among effective and successful inclusion, effective curriculum and instructional practices, building of community and support, school improvement and restructuring efforts, and increased learning of children with and without disabilities. Individual sections of the report provide information on the study's methodology, a summary of the Michigan's team's findings, and school stories from the Michigan team. The largest section provides findings concerning each of the five principles of whole schooling. Appended are a list of advisory committee members and the whole school tool kit which provides information on key elements of building a whole school, the whole schooling renewal process, the whole schooling assessment scale, and whole schooling guidelines. (DB)

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Learning WellTogether

Lessons About Connecting Inclusive Education To Whole School Improvement

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

ED 479 813

The WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT was a collaborative, qualitative study of inclusive education and its relationship with exemplary teaching and schooling practices in 16 schools in Michigan and Wisconsin from 1998 - 2002. The project was funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, Award number: H324D980013.

Researchers included: MICHIGAN TEAM: Wayne State University: Michael Peterson (Special education), Holly Feen (Art therapy and art education), Lynne Tamor (Parent and researcher), Melissa Silagy (teacher and researcher), and Rich Gibson (social studies, San Diego State University).

Cardinal Stritch University: Kim Beloin (Special education).University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point: Paula DeHart (Social studies education).

FINAL REPORT
Whole Schooling Research Project

July 2002

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WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION

We began this study by developing a framework of principles with associated practices that we believed represented best practices in schooling for all students. In this framework, which we have called Whole Schooling, inclusive education for students with disabilities was a central rather than peripheral component. The principles composing the framework were interactive and necessarily dependent upon one another. The precise description and language of these principles has undergone revision throughout this study and related activities as we have learned more about images of best practices. In many ways, a major product of this research project has been a refinement and clarification of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as reflecting best practices for inclusive education. As of May 2002, the Five Principles of Whole Schooling are as follows:

1. **Empower citizens in a democracy**: The goal of education is to help students learn to function as effective citizens in a democracy.
2. **Include all.** All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, and age.
3. **Engage in authentic multi-level teaching.** Teachers design instruction for diverse learners that engages them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities, and develop accommodations and adaptations for learners with diverse needs, interests, and abilities.
4. **Build community and support learning.** The school uses specialized school and community resources (e.g., special education, Title I, gifted education) to build support for students, parents, and teachers. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school and provide proactive supports for students with behavioral challenges.
5. **Partner with families and the community.** Educators engage in genuine collaboration within the school and with families and the community, engage the school in strengthening the community, and engage students, parents, teachers, and others in decision-making and direction of learning and school activities.

Our prime research goal has been understanding how these principles relate to effective implementation of inclusive education. We expected that when we found these practices

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effectively implemented, we would find more intense and successful implementation of inclusive education. Conversely, we expected that when we found effective inclusive education, we would find the other exemplary practices being implemented as the foundation of the success. As we shall detail in the pages below, these proved simultaneously to be a correct and naïve hypothesis.

The first major stepin this project, therefore, was the development of the framework for Whole Schooling that served as the basis of the hypotheses and research questions we explored our research. We now describe the process by which these principles were developed along with their present form.

The first draft of the principles of Whole Schooling was developed by Michael Peterson and Kim Beloin, respectively from Wayne State University in Detroit and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, as they outlined ideas for what came to be called the Whole Schooling Research Project. They came together in a 3 day meeting at the University of Wisconsin-Steven's Point in July of 1997 to explore a potential research project based on the belief that good teaching practices and inclusive education were mutually complementary and reinforcing, rather than at odds. This perspective was based on their mutual involvement with inclusive education systems change projects in Michigan and Wisconsin. As a result, the principles they drafted were a synthesis of literature review, research, and engagement with inclusive education change efforts in schools.

Michael Peterson and Kim Beloin met in a small university office for three full days, exploring how to articulate and structure a study. Gradually, they moved from thinking about the positive interrelationships between inclusive education and constructivist, authentic teaching approaches only and began to articulate a hypothesis that inclusive education was consistent with and dependent upon relationships with other components of exemplary schooling and teaching. Prior to the second day meeting, Michael made a list of such exemplary practices and gave it the working title of "whole schooling".

Subsequently, Michael and Kim spent the next two days developing these ideas and fleshing out a process for the research study. At that point, six principles of whole schooling were listed: (1) Including all students learning together; (2) Teaching for diversity; (3) Adapting and differentiating; (4) Supporting Learning; (5) Building community and proactive responses to behavioral challenges; and (6) Partnering with parents and the community.

On his return to Detroit, Michael met with Richard Gibson, social studies faculty member and colleague who was also to be partner in the research project. As the two of them reviewed the initial framework, Rich had several questions and concerns. He and Michael had been conferring intensely at Wayne State University for more than a year, exploring issues of social justice, needs and problems of schools, particularly in the Detroit Public Schools, and interactions of many issues – inclusive education, effective teaching, content of instruction, race and class. Rich asked: "What is it all for? What is the purpose of schooling?" Out of this initial interaction and subsequent discussion, the team added a critical piece as the underlying foundation of the entire framework: *citizenship in a democracy*, as both an outcome for effective schooling and a process of school change, management, and classroom practice.

In our articulation of these principles, we have drawn on research related to exemplary teaching practices, inclusive education and national progressive school reform organizations, particularly Accelerated Schools, Comer's School Development Program, Howard Gardner's Project Zero, and Sizer's Coalition for Essential Schools. However, the principles of Whole Schooling have sought to address several problematic issues in schooling that include not addressed comprehensively by these other projects and organizations:

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- The ongoing segregation of students with different learning styles and abilities into special programs for students with disabilities, at risk, gifted, limited English speaking.
- Instructional strategies based on isolated, skills-centered instruction that is disconnected from the real lives and family and community experience of students.
- The need for democratic processes of decision-making in schools that empower students, families, teachers, and other school staff.
- Lack of supports for families and lack of connection between families, schools, and communities.
- The lack of attention to the social and political context of schooling – the increasing inequality in schools and communities, pressures for standardized testing that separate students, families, and whole communities by race, socio-economic status, and ability.

While the research project was not funded the first year, a range of actions resulted that served as a field-test of the face validity of the Whole Schooling framework and provided numerous additional opportunities for analysis and dialogue that sharpened the articulation of the principles of Whole Schooling and the research questions of this study. The team developed a concept paper and description of the framework that formed the basis for this study that was used to communicate with other parties[1] .

Both Michael Peterson and Kim Beloin shared information about the Whole Schooling framework with two principals in Michigan and Wisconsin, respectively. They were surprised that one principal from a very rural Wisconsin school stated that these principles articulated well the type of school he and his staff had been trying to be for many years. The Detroit principal was anxious to improve her school in concert with district initiatives, and became excited that this framework articulated the type of school they would like to work to *become*. Within a week of speaking with us, she presented the framework to her staff who unanimously adopted it.

Within a short time, these two principals sought to recruit other schools to work together in using the Whole Schooling principles as a guide to their school improvement efforts. By February of 1998, the Whole Schooling Consortium was established as a working network of schools and faculty members.

During the time in which we have engaged in this research project, the Whole Schooling Consortium has grown and developed, providing a great many opportunities for dialogue, learning, and thinking regarding the principles and practices that were outlined as the framework. These activities have included: (1) two national conferences held in Detroit in the summers of 1999 and 2000, and based on the Whole Schooling principles; (2) major presentations for three years at the annual meeting of The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH), including sponsorship of a one day strand on inclusive education and school reform, at the annual meeting of National Council for the Social Studies, and at state and local conferences in

[1] See http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/WSPaper.html

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Michigan and Wisconsin; (3) development of a growing network of interested university faculty, teachers, and principals, and parents in 15 states.

During the last year of the project, several project schools in Michigan led the formation of the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling, drawing together some 12 schools in a learning network based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. In the last year, we have organized three one-day conferences through this group.

From a qualitative research perspective, these many activities have provided extensive opportunity for discussion regarding our observations in schools and our understanding of the interaction of practices associated with the Five Principles of Whole Schooling to create effective, inclusive schools. Out of these processes, we found that the principles of Whole Schooling indeed embody a useful framework to address important issues that have been inadequately addressed in most school reform efforts.

These activities and discussions provided the context and backdrop for our actual research study in which we spent intensive time in seven schools selected because of their exemplary implementation of inclusive education, along with other key principles of the Whole Schooling framework. In addition, we had the simultaneous opportunity to collect information through action research and school reform projects in schools with problematic practices and to collect information by sampling of schools throughout the Detroit metropolitan area. As we describe below, all this has provided a very rich database from which to understand the relationship of inclusive education to whole school reform.

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WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

As we began this study, our fundamental hypothesis was that practices associated with the Five Principles of Whole Schooling -- inclusive education, authentic and constructivist teaching, support for teachers and students, and school restructuring are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The following research question regarding this relationship was articulated in the original research proposal:

> What is the relationship among effective and successful inclusion, effective curriculum and instructional practices, building of community and support, school improvement and restructuring efforts, and increased learning of children with and without disabilities?

To this we added additional related questions:

1. To what degree are inclusive schooling, authentic curriculum, and related school reform practices (identified in the "whole schooling" and other related models) being implemented in selected schools in Wisconsin and Michigan? How do these practices influence and relate to one another?
2. In a representative sample of schools, what is the interplay between inclusion, supports, teaching practices, and other aspects of school reform practices and successful supports for teachers and outcomes for students?
3. What is happening in school settings that are identified as having successful inclusion. What do the exemplary models look like with regard to curriculum, instructional strategies, supports, adaptation, levels of engagement, etc? What are the student outcomes in such settings?
4. What are the dynamics of change and school improvement in urban and rural schools that have committed to school reform in which inclusive education is a central component.

Student with the label of cognitive impairment writing in his daily journal in a multi-level teaching class.

Research Hypotheses

We hypothesized that the degree to which a set of practices relating to one of the Whole Schooling principles is in place influences the degree to which practices relating to other principles occur. Authentic, multi-level learning, we believed, promotes and supports effective inclusive education. We expected to find more implementation of inclusive education,broadly defined, in schools in which authentic instructional practices were used, higher satisfaction rates on the part of teachers, parents, and students, and higher levels of achievement on the part of all students.

Conversely, we thought that quality implementation of inclusive education should support effective, authentic learning practices. We expected that where the highest quality of inclusive education were being implemented we would find high quality and diverse uses of authentic instructional practices. When inclusive education for students with disabilities, authentic curriculum, and other diverse teaching practices were implemented together, outcomes for students in the areas listed above *and* those more narrow skills being assessed by typical state examinations would be higher.

Similarly, we expected to find that support for teachers and such effective instructional practices play an interactive role. However, we did not believe that support for teachers could compensate for poor teaching practices. We further anticipated that when schools commit to school reform with inclusive education as a central component, but where the focus is on improving education for all children, teachers and the school community will embrace inclusive education. Ultimately the measured and perceived achievement of children and satisfaction with the school would increase substantially. We did expect to find areas of substantial conflict regarding these principles and struggle regarding how they become part of the practice of the school. We expected to find that the capacity of schools to struggle through these issues and to obtain support and assistance themselves, would determine their effectiveness in improving education for all children and their continued commitment to inclusive education.

The anticipated interaction between inclusive education and practices associated with the other four principles of Whole Schooling is graphically represented in the figure below. These are highly complex interactions that raise critical questions. Taken together, they address the entire culture of a school. In the course of the project, as we have engaged these questions, struggling to find answers, we have become increasingly aware of the impact of political dynamics and the interrelationships with race and class in all the schools we studied.

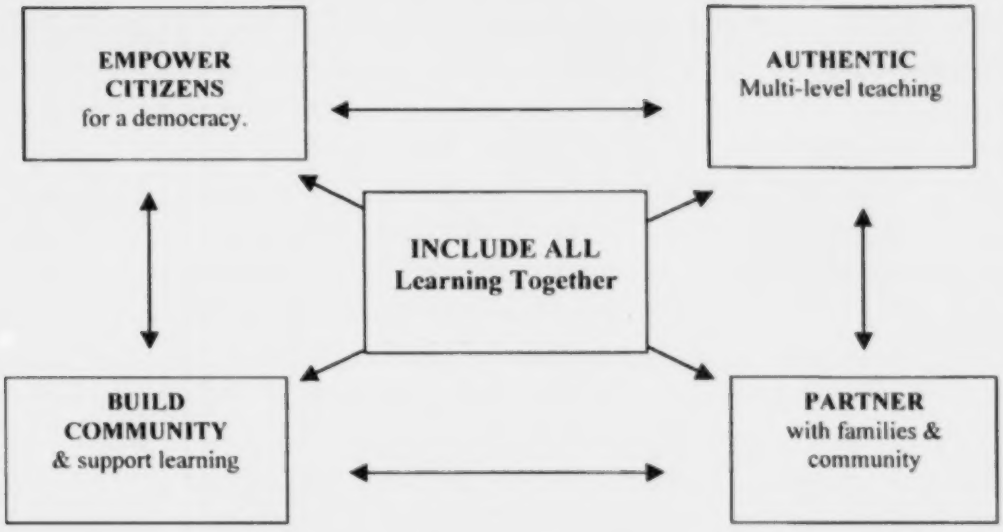

Table II-1: The Five Principles of Whole Schooling

Data Collection

This project involved two teams of researchers in two states, Michigan and Wisconsin. Our primary source of data in both states was intensive involvement in the lives of seven schools in Michigan and either in Wisconsin. Other schools were involved in less intensive but important ways. Information sources included the following:

- Intensive involvement in "project schools" (7 in Michigan and 8 in Wisconsin): (a) classroom observations; (b) focus and dialogue groups with educators and parents; and (c) interviews with educators and parents.
- Telephone interviews with 35 schools and site visits with 25 schools in each state as part of the selection process for schools for intensive study.
- 250 observations in the Detroit Metropolitan area of diverse schools engaged in various forms of inclusion and mainstreaming.
- Participant observer documentation of school reform efforts associated with the five principle of Whole Schooling taking place at three schools on Detroit's east side.

Below, we discuss the systematic process we used to select schools for intensive study and discuss briefly other forms of data collection.

Selection of exemplary schools through interviews and site visits.

We used a comprehensive, systematic process in selecting schools for intensive observations in this study. We developed two tools to assist us in identifying exemplary schools. First, a simple ***Nomination Form*** was developed so that schools might nominate themselves as being

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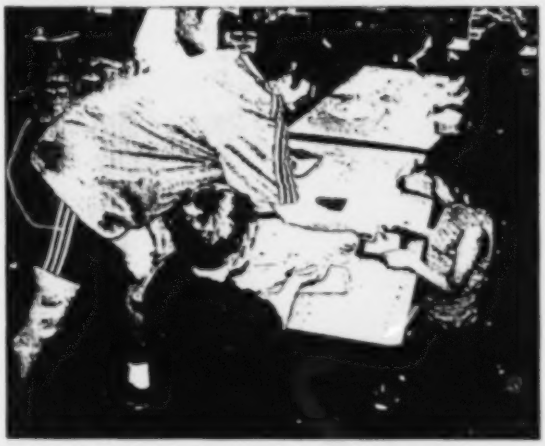
exemplary schools based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Additionally, we developed a ***Self-Assessment Tool*** by which schools might assess their degree of implementation of specific Whole Schooling practices (see Appendix D-1 and D-2).

We sent a letter and nomination form to all building principals, superintendents, and special education directors of public schools in Michigan and to all building principals and superintendents in Wisconsin. In these letters, we invited nominations of schools for participation in the Whole Schooling Research Project based on their exemplary implementation of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. In addition to the nomination form, we included a description of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, an Information Sheet regarding the project, and a return envelope.



Principal of Sunset Lake Elementary School

We received 35 nominations from schools throughout each states. Upon receipt of a school's nomination, the school was sent another letter requesting that they complete the Self-Assessment Tool. Options were given regarding how this might be done – by an individual principal, by a team working together, or by multiple staff members separately. The returned Self-Assessment Tools were studied by each of the respective state research teams in preparation for telephone interviews with school staff.

The teams in each state conducted conference call ***telephone interviews*** with staff in each school that returned a Self-Assessment Tool. The purpose of these interviews was expansion of information we had about the school and gauging the interactive style of each group. The Wisconsin team divided their schools between the researchers so that individual research members made individual calls and site visits. In Michigan, telephone interviews were conducted by the research team on a speaker phone. We asked each school interviewee to describe the situation at their school:

- The local community, the school, numbers of students.
- Background of the principal of the school and other staff if they participated.
- The types of students with disabilities were included in the school, the degree to which some students were referred to segregated programs.
- The degree of inclusion, whether pull-out instruction or separate classes were utilized.
- The school's approach to literacy instruction – eg. Phonics, whole language.
- The approach to dealing with behavioral challenges utilized.
- Partnerships with parents and the community.
- The reason the school was interested in participating in the research project.

We kept narrative records of these conversations and utilized these and other information received from the school to disqualify some schools and select others for site visits. These

records have also provided valuable sources of data as the project has progressed. We disqualified 10 schools out of this process for the following reasons:

- *The school was not inclusive*. We were surprised that some schools had all students with disabilities in self-contained special education classes.
- *The school did not have exemplary practices associated with other Whole Schooling principles.* For example, the principal of one school was proud of the use of punitive, rigid enforcement of rules of conduct including searches by local police. This approach is inompatible with the principles concerning building community and democracy.

Twenty-five schools were selected for site visits. The Michigan staff conducted site visits through the middle of April of Year One. Because of the locations of the schools, several requiring over-night lodging, it was impossible for all four Michigan reearchers to visit all schools. However, the team scheduled visits so that at least two researchers could be present. At ten of the local schools, three researchers were able partipate in the site visit. In Wisconsin, individual researchers visited schools alone.

Site visits involved approximately one-half day engaged in the an interview with the principal, observations in classrooms the school considered "inclusive", and discussions with teachers and staff. Each site visit team documented its observations in reports that described what was seen and heard.

Following the completion of the site visits, teams in both states began the process of narrowing down the list of schools to be selected for intensive study. The Wisconsin team rated each school based on their implementation of the five principles of Whole Schooling, developing a ranking of schools. Researchers then compared their relative rankings and made selection decisions with the input and guidance of their Advisory Committee.

The Michigan team carefully considered schools based on the following criteria: degree of implementation of inclusion and the other principles and practices of whole schooling; the racial, socio-economic, and other demographic characteristics of the schools and communities in which they were located; the dynamics of the school district related to movement towards inclusion; and the degree of comfort, connection, and acceptance felt from school staff. We grappled with whether our research would be more informative with a greater number of schools, representing a wider geographic area, or whether fewer schools would allow us to immerse ourselves in greater depth in each school. Ultimately, we realized that there was so much to see and understand about the cultures in every single school, that we wondered at times whether we spread ourselves too thin in taking on the seven schools that selected.

Originally we thought that the Wisconsin team would find schools in rural areas, and the Michigan team would select schools from urban areas. In reality, each state received nominations from both rural and urban areas. In addition to the

substantive criteria, logistical considerations had to be considered. As mentioned, several of the schools involved a day's drive from the researchers' homes. On the Michigan team, there were also four researchers: three full-time faculty members and one research assistant, a position that would be held by different students year to year. The number of schools selected had to be limited to a number we could comfortably visit given our other responsibilities. The original plan called for selecting six schools for intensive study with two "runners-up" in the case of drop-outs,. This would permit two researchers to be assigned in staggered fashion to each of the schools. Still, we found it very difficult to narrow down our selection to six schools. Therefore, in both states, we decided to increase the number of schools intensively studied, from 6 to 7. In both situations, we felt that we have much to gain from these additional schools.

The Wisconsin staff selected schools by mid-March of Year One. They began observations and data collection in April which allowed more than a month of data collection prior to the summer break. In Michigan, team members met with the principal and staff at each school to discuss logistics and conducted some informal observations at the end of Year One. Data collection in these schools began in earnest in August of 1999, the beginning of Year Two. The following schools were selected for in-depth study in both states.[1]

Michigan
Armstrong Primary School (Rural)
Drummond High School (Suburban)
Evergreen Elementary School (Rural)
Hamilton Elementary School (Suburban)
Meadowview Elementary School (Semi-urban)
Rogers High School (Suburban)
Westover Elementary School (Rural)

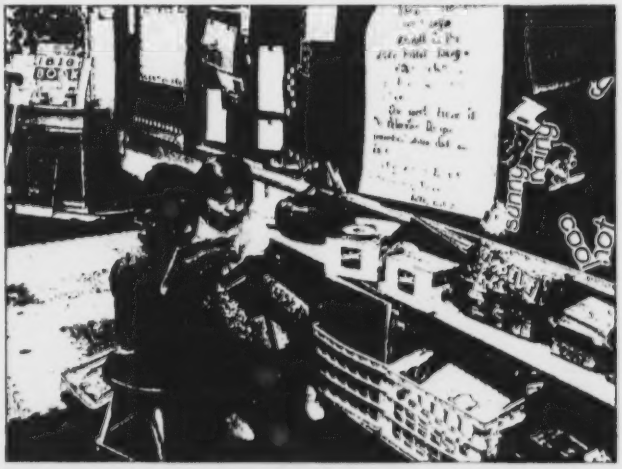
Wisconsin.
Colby Middle School (Rural)
Frank Elementary School (Urban)
Gilman Elementary School (Rural)
Lily Elementary School (Rural)
Lincoln Elementary School (Suburban)
Verona Area Senior High School Walker International Middle School (Urban)
Washington Elementary School (Rural)
(Suburban)

Exemplary school observations in selected classrooms.

[1] We have coded the names of the Michigan schools, as well as of individuals mentioned elsewhere in the report, to maintain confidentiality.

In each school in the study, a small number of teachers, four in most cases, were selected on which to focus our observations. However, we received permission letters to observe in all classes in the schools. In Michigan, while we spent more time with these focus teachers, we would randomly visit other classes throughout the school. We were seeking to understand the overall culture of the school as well as practices within specific classrooms. We conducted intensive observations for two years in the seven schools identified as having exemplary inclusive education as well as practices associated with the other principals of Whole Schooling.

In each state we established a schedule by which schools were visited every one to two weeks for three or four hours each time. In each school, researchers identified four classes which were 'focus classes'. Data was collected via the following methods:



1. Observations of classroom practice (using laptops to take detailed observational notes and digital cameras and video-cameras to record pictorial data);
2. Notes taken during interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents; and
3. Notes taken during focus groups with staff and parents.

In Michigan, formal data collection in project schools began in the Fall of 1999. Each team conducted more than 200 observations in schools. The Michigan Team conducted 230 observations generating over 1,000 single spaced pages of reports, took 310 photographs, and recorded 52 hours of videotape. The Wisconsin staff selected schools by mid-March of 1999 and began observations and data collection in April of 1999, involving some 146 observations.

Focus and dialogue groups.

In our original plans, we anticipated having periodic focus groups with both teachers and parents. For complex logistical reasons, such focus groups did not systematically occur in all schools. However, in several schools we did hold focus groups related to inclusive education and topics that included authentic multi-level teaching. In several schools we held focus groups on particular topics, as part of the school improvement planning or professional development efforts within the school. In Michigan , during the last year of the project numerous professional development sessions were held that provided additional opportunities to listen to and engage in staff dialogue. Topics related particularly to authentic multi-level instruction, use of support staff, building community, heterogeneous placement, and other grouping issues.

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Interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents.

In each school, we had ongoing conversations with teachers, parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and students. In some cases, these were set as formal interviews; in others, such interactions were informal conversations. The Wisconsin team was particularly active in documenting formal interviews with educators and parents. In Michigan, we also systematically collected and used information from other related sources. **Interviews and observations in 35 schools**.

In a process described below, we conducted telephone interviews of 35 schools and half-day site visits of 25 schools in each state. In Michigan we documented both interviews and site visits and used this information as data for analysis in exploring our hypotheses.

Observations of randomly selected schools in the Detroit Metropolitan area.

Michael Peterson required that students in classes on inclusive education conduct observations and interviews in schools engaging in some version of inclusive education in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Over the course of the project, some 250 such observations were conducted and reports generated. We used this information as another data source in exploring the hypotheses in the project. While selection was not random in the statistical sense, it was not systematically controlled and depended on numerous extraneous factors, such as proximity to the students' homes, personal connections with school staff, and so forth.

Whole Schooling school renewal projects.

As the project progressed, parallel research and demonstration projects were underway in both states that allowed us to gather additional information connected with this study. Two project researchers in Michigan worked with a cluster of three schools on Detroit's east side to formulate and begin implementation of a plan for comprehensive school improvement based on the Whole Schooling principles. These schools had many challenges but had committed to use of the Whole Schooling framework to guide their school improvement efforts. Similarly, in Wisconsin, one school, with support from a Wisconsin researcher, used the Whole Schooling framework to obtain funding for a school reform effort. Throughout the last year of the project, Michael Peterson worked with a school on the southwest side of Detroit helping to support that school's effort to initiate inclusive education based in part on the principles of Whole Schooling. Data gathered through participant observations in these schools also has added to our understanding and analysis.

Principal greets gathering of 300 parents from 3 schools to a dialogue on how the schools might be improved.

Another team member implemented a service learning project with students in a Wayne State University art therapy program in one of the project elementary schools. Yet another team member has been very active in two controversial areas: promoting resistance to the use of standardized tests across the country and in Michigan, and studying the dynamics of the abolition of the elected school board of the Detroit Public Schools by the Governor of Michigan, and the installation of a school board appointed by Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer. The entire team was involved in organizing two conferences centered around the Whole Schooling principles that brought together school teams, national experts, and other interested parents and educators. During the last year of the study, five of the seven schools came together to develop a Michigan Leadership Network for Inclusive Schooling. Finally, one of the Michigan team members is also the parent of a student with significant disabilities who is working toward full inclusion of her son in an elementary school not formally connected with the project. Documentation of her son's story is also a source of data for this study.

Research Team Interactions

This study was conceptualized as a joint effort to study schools in Michigan and Wisconsin using the same processes and based on the same research questions. We were successful in this to some degree. However, the complexity of data collection and analysis, along with differing dynamics in our two states, has forced us to work separately as well. Our final research reports represent both sharing of information and dialogue across the two states and parallel with individual efforts and analysis by each team.

We sought to utilize several processes to work as a team across our two states that included the following:

- We conducted conference calls during the first year and a half of the project of the total teams along with Dr. Rick Reardon, a specialist in qualitative research who was retained to provide us assistance in shaping the project.
- Local teams met every two to four weeks throughout the project to share observations, data collection methods, and discuss interpretations of what we were seeing.
- All team members emailed copies of observational reports to all other members of their local team.

Within and across state team dialogues, our discussions were rich and lively. We were aware that action research methods are often described in terms of cycles and spirals of consecutive steps including formulation of a problem, gathering and analysis of data on the problem, planning improvements based on the data, execution of the plans, monitoring, reflection on the outcomes, and reformulation of the problem. We aimed to engage in careful data collection and analysis, keeping in perspective the importance of a strict sequence of steps.

At best, learning and acting are reciprocal, mutually reinforcing processes. In many ways, this project has involved such a reciprocal process, demonstrating action research in the truest sense. We have gathered and attempted to sort through, analyze, and understand information from a variety of sources. Most centrally, we spent substantial amounts of time in schools, typically with two researchers assigned to each school. In these observations, we focused on the classrooms of selected teachers, but also sought to develop an understanding and sense of the culture of the entire school, seeing how the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, as we have

articulated an understood them, interacted with respect to inclusion of students with disabilities. The process by which we have analyzed information to develop findings and understandings has been iterative. On the one hand, we have sought to understand each school in which we have been observing, to develop a sense of the story of the school, its culture, dynamics of change in which it is imbedded. We have developed collegial relationships with teachers, administrators, and other school staff. On the other hand, those very relationships, together with our work on understanding the life of each classroom and school, often inviting us to become part of the very change processes we were studying.

Our two teams took somewhat different philosophical approaches to our involvement in the schools and to the roles of researchers within the schools. The Wisconsin team took what we will call an 'ethnographic' approach, seeing their roles as impartial observers recording what they see and attempting to identify patterns in those records. The Michigan team took a the approach generally described as "action research", becoming actively involved in the very processes being studied. Indeed, the difference in approaches itself became topic of considerable discussion, at least within the Michigan team.

Discussion about what we were seeing became a source of data in the project. We wrote numerous analysis memoranda to one another, in addition to reporting and discussing our observations in team meetings. In particular, how differing researchers considered our relationship to change dynamics in the school has provided rich perspectives. For example,. Rich Gibson explained that "this project is about change. Either research helps an entity change in a direction or, by the nature of passivity, promotes status quo and conservative resistance to change or change towards a non-progressive direction." Other researchers on the team disagreed indicating that "research should not be about change but about learning and watching. We don't know how a school should change. We shouldn't try to make them". School personnel in interviews and site visits, however, invited the research team into their schools reflecting the following sentiment: "We want you here to help us learn, be better, improve." They asked that project staff give them feedback, ask hard questions, connect them with resources, and otherwise support change. These differences resulted in spirited conversation and dialogue that has assisted in sharpening the understandings and clarity of each research team. Our collaboration engaging these two different project perspectives is an important part of the research project itself and yielded metacognitive analysis as a part of the project data set.

Data Analysis

We have utilized several analysis strategies that have served to build on and interact with one another.

Informant dialogue. Ongoing dialogue, interviews, and informal conversation were used to explore and verify emerging hypotheses emerging from the data collection processes described above. Together these iterative processes have aided in building an understanding of practices and issues from the ground up.

Interpretive dialogues. Throughout the life of the project, the Michigan team held meetings every two weeks and the Wisconsin team also met periodically. For the first year we conducted telephone conversations once per month between the teams in both states; in the last two years we met twice per year for several hours. During team meetings we discussed our experiences

regarding observations, questions that had arisen, and our interpretations of what we were seeing. These meetings provided team support for the research process and deepened understandings of issues and findings.

Memo writing. Beginning in the early part of Year Two, we began writing interpretive memos to summarize key findings and issues. These memos were shared via online communication with all team members and helped to focus conversation in face to face interpretive dialogues. These memos helped to clarify issues and shape next steps in the research process.

Thematic analysis. We reviewed the observation notes and videotapes, coding both. The Michigan team used the program Q.S.R. NUDist to assist in this process while the Wisconsin team did such coding by hand. In both cases, we used the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as a beginning framework upon which we built as coding schemes expanded.

The research teams also utilized several interacting strategies to enhance the **reliability and validity** and multiple interpretive perspectives on the information we obtained.

Multiple eyes. In each school, two researchers were assigned. In some cases, this became problematic to implement. However, ultimately all schools were observed by 3-4 researchers who shared perspectives and information. Dialogue across the Michigan and Wisconsin teams helped to enhance respective ways of seeing the schools. Analysis of audio and video tapes of school observations provided opportunities to review observations multiple times by several parties to increase the reliability and validity of interpretation.

Dialogues and forums. As we describe below, during the course of the project, staff were involved in numerous forums that provided opportunity for sharing of initial findings and engage in dialogue with staff of the project schools as well as other experts. We wrote publications, held forums in schools, organized three local and two national conferences, made numerous presentations in state and national conferences, taught courses in which our findings were shared with current and prospective teachers, and developed publications describing initial findings and analysis.

Member checks were also used to add validity to the findings. Final narrative reports on each school in Wisconsin were read by at least one school-based member in order to verify the accuracy of content and increase the validity of the school-based findings. In Michigan such member checks were more informal and verbal.

In our analysis of project results, we have engaged in looking at data from several different perspectives, gradually producing reports and information drawing from these. These perspectives include the following:

1. **School change: Process and outcome.** We sought to analyze the stories of each school and their dynamic of change, showing the interaction of various practices with other complex demographic variables.

2. **Analysis of Practices for Inclusive Schooling.** For each of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling we conducted an analysis that focused on the following:

    - **Options in practices within and across schools.** Analysis of ways in which practices are being implemented in schools using the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as an organizing framework including samplings of best observed practices.
    - **Impacts of practices.** Analysis of when, why, where, and how differing practices are used, the dynamics influencing use.
    - **Interactions of practices.** Analysis and description of the way we observed one set of practices interacting with and impacting on other practices.
    - **Towards guidelines for excellence.** Analysis of lessons based on best practices drawing guidelines.

Based on this process, we have developed a document that is organized in the following way. We first describe what we have called ***school stories***: reasonably detailed descriptions of each school. We then have provided a cross-schools analysis chapter organized around each of the Whole Schooling principles. These include:

- Including all: practices and dynamics for inclusion.
- Democracy in the school and classroom: power and decision-making.
- Authentic multi-level instruction: Instructional practices supportive of inclusion.
- Community building and positive responses to behavioral challenges
- Support for learning: support structures and collaboration between support staff and general education teachers.

In the reports from each state, we both describe variations or options in practices we saw in the different schools and use our data to move towards the formulation of guidelines and examples of exemplary practice. We are continuing to conduct additional detailed analyses and anticipate additional subsequent publications based on our database.

Project sponsored conferences and institutes.

Michigan Whole Schooling Forum. In October of 1998, the project sponsored a Whole Schooling Forum in Detroit as a beginning event for the research project.

Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Both teams sponsored summer institutes to facilitate sharing and networking among the schools who nominated themselves for participation in this research study. In Wisconsin, a one-day conference of 200 people is being sponsored prior to the Annual Inclusion Conference. In Michigan, a 3 day event was sponsored as a collaborative event

of several entities – the Whole Schooling Research Project, College of Education of Wayne State University, Neighborhood Transition Project, Eastside Detroit Whole Schooling Cluster, and the Rouge Forum. This event brought together urban, suburban, and rural schools throughout Michigan and Ohio. Some 100 individuals attended and had opportunities to share and network. We drew national leaders and speakers related to inclusive education, whole language, critical pedagogy, and standardized testing.

Education Summit 2000. Building on this success, the Michigan team joined with the Rouge Forum and Whole Language Umbrella to sponsor a second conference June 26-28, 2000. The event drew 240 people from 4 countries and 18 states and involved 25 national leaders in whole language, inclusive education, critical pedagogy, social studies, alternative assessment, and other arenas. The conference provided an opportunity for sharing across urban, rural, and suburban schools, engagement with national leaders, and organizing a research and action agenda to help promote effective inclusive education in the context of other effective educational practices.

Wisconsin Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Six of the eight Whole Schooling Research schools attended the third annual Whole Schooling Research project Summer Institute in July, 2001. Wisconsin researchers presented the findings from each of the schools as well as the across-schools findings. This was well received by all. Whole Schooling teams built relationships and discussed ideas with each other throughout the day, and some made plans to visit each other's schools. School teams received some financial support for their travel, given that some school staff had to travel 5 hours one way to attend the Institute. The Whole Schooling Institute was immediately followed by the Eighth Annual Summer Leadership Institute on Inclusive Education. A few of the Whole Schooling Research School teams stayed for three days and attended both Institutes, and some of the whole schooling Research School teams also presented at the Inclusion Institute.

Publications related to project.

Beloin, K. & Peterson, M. (Spring, 2000). *For richer or poorer: Building inclusive schools in poor urban and rural communities*. International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education, 47 (1), 15-24.

Beloin, K., Suomi, J., & DeHart, P. (January, 1999). *Whole Schooling: Education for a democratic society*. Wisconsin School News Journal. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Association of School Boards.

Feathers, K., Peterson, M., and Beloin, K. (Fall, 1999). *Inclusive education and whole language: Commonalities*. Talking Points, 10 (2), 15 – 18.

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Feathers, K., Peterson, M., and Beloin, K. (October / November, 1999). *Moving towards inclusive education: Two stories.* Talking Points, 11 (1), 17 - 20.

Gibson, R. & Peterson, M. (2001). *Whole schooling: Implementing progressive school reform.* In Wayne E. Ross (Ed.). The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities. New York: State University of New York Press.

Peterson, M. (2002). *Towards whole schools: Building a movement for creativity and collaborative learning in the 21st century.* In Jacqueline Thousand and Richard Villa (Eds.). Creativity and collaborative learning: A practical guide for empowering students, teachers, and families in an inclusive, multicultural, and pluralistic society. Baltimore: Paul W. Brookes Publishers.

Peterson, M. (April, 2000). *Whole schooling: Linking inclusive education to school renewal.* Newsletter of The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH), 26 (1), 10 – 12.

Peterson, M. (In press, publication date Fall, 2001). *Towards inclusive schooling in Detroit: Lessons from the motor city.* In Doug Fisher (Ed.). Inclusive urban schools: Lessons learned in big city schools. Baltimore: Paul W. Brookes Publishers.

Peterson, M. and Hittie, M. (2002, in press). Inclusive Teaching: Developing effective schools for all learners. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Conference presentations.

Beloin, K. (July, 2000). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project: What have we learned thus far.* Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Wausau, WI.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (November, 2000). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project: What have we learned from eight Wisconsin schools.* National Council for the Social Studies National Conference. San Antonio, TX.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (July, 1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project: What have we learned thus far.* Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Wausau, WI.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (November, 1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project.* National Council for the Social Studies National Conference. Orlando, FL.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (November, 1999). *Whole Schooling: Taking Inclusion to the Next Level.* Wisconsin Association for Children with Behavior Disorders State Conference. Madison, WI.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (December,1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Chicago, IL.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project: What have we learned from 8 Wisconsin schools.* (July, 2001). Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Wausau, WI.

Beloin, K., DeHart, P. Gallagher, S., Hopkins, V. & Thuestad, E. (December, 2000). *Rural-Urban Whole School Research Project: What have we learned from rural and urban elementary schools.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Miami Beach, FL

Beloin, K., DeHart, P., Voss, T., & Anderson, J. Rural-Urban *Whole School Research Project: What have we learned from secondary schools.* (November, 2001). Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Annaheim, CA.

Beloin, K. & Peterson, M. (October, 1998). *Teaching the inclusive teacher: Restructuring the mainstreaming course in teacher education.* The annual conference of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Dallas, Texas.

Gibson, R. and Peterson, M. (June 11, 1999). *The Rouge Forum and the De-regulation of Knowledge. Working Class Studies Conference.* Youngstown, Ohio: Youngstown State University.

Gibson, R. and Peterson, M. (June 12, 1999). *Equality Requires Inclusion in Democracy: How We Understand the Complex Role of Class in School Reform.* Working Class Studies Conference. Youngstown, Ohio: Youngstown State University.

Gibson, R., Peterson, M., Goslee, A., Queen, G., Landless, G., Depew, J. (March, 2000). *Behind the Mask: Standardized Testing and It's Impact of Learning.* Great Lakes Council of Social Studies Conference. Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Gibson, R., Peterson, M., Goslee, A., Queen, G., Landless, G., Depew, J. (March, 2000). *The Detroit Teacher Strike: An Injury to One is an Injury to All.* Great Lakes Council of Social Studies Conference. Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Peterson, M. (November 15, 2001). *Whole Schooling Consortium: Inclusive education at the center of school reform.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps. Anaheim California.

Peterson, M. (July 27, 2001). *Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners. Freedom to teach, Freedom to learn.* Annual conference of the Whole Language Umbrella. Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M. (June 22, 1999). *Building the whole school for inclusive, democratic communities.* Keynote address at the Whole Schooling Summer Institute, June 22-24, 1999. Detroit, Michigan.

Peterson, M. (November 16, 2001). *Key elements of building an inclusive school: Connecting students with disabilities to whole school reform.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps. Anaheim California.

Peterson, M. (February 28, 2001). *Whole schooling principles: Guiding school renewal towards inclusion and democracy.* Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling: Organizational meeting. Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Peterson, M., Chair, (December 8, 2000). *Strand: Whole School Reform & Inclusive Education.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Miami Beach, Florida.

Peterson, M. (December, 2002). *Inclusive Teaching: Reinventing the mainstreaming course.* To be presented at the annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Boston.

Peterson, M. and Beloin, K. (August, 1998). *Whole Schooling: Inclusive education and whole language.* Whole Language Umbrella. Charlotte, North Carolina.

Peterson, M. and Beloin, K. (December, 1998). *Teaching the inclusive teacher: Restructuring the mainstreaming course in teacher education.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Seattle, Washington.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Feen, H., and DeHart, P. (December 8-11, 1999). *Linking Inclusive Education to School Reform: The Whole Schooling Consortium.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Feen, H., and DeHart, P. (December 8-11, 1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Mayfield, Y., Feen, H., DeHart, P., Arnold, A., Ferrito, D. . (December, 1998). *Whole Schooling: Linking Urban and Rural Educational Reform.* The

Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Seattle, Washington.

Peterson, M., Colliton, J., Mick, B. & Roberts-Levi, S. (July 27, 2001). *Building Inclusive Schools: We are all the thread and the needle. Freedom to teach, Freedom to learn.* Annual conference of the Whole Language Umbrella, Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M., DeHart, P., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Goslee, A., DePew, J., and Ross, W. (November 19-21, 1999). *Teaching for Inclusion, Community & Democracy: The Whole Schooling Consortium.* National Council of Social Studies. Orlando, Florida.

Peterson, M. & Gibson, R. (August 4, 1999). *Whole Schooling: Literacy, Inclusion, and Democracy.* Whole Language Umbrella. Rochester, New York.

Peterson, M. and Tamor, L. (December, 2002). *Inclusion and School Reform: You can't have one without the other.* To be presented at the annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Boston.

Peteronson, M. and Tamor, L. (December, 2002). *Creating Inclusive School Renewal: Joining the struggle to create effective schools for all.* To be presented at the Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Boston.

Peterson, M., Tamor, L., Creech, N., and Sharon, Tanya. (July, 2002) Multi-Level Teaching: *Teaching students with vastly different academic, social-emotional, and sensory-physical abilities together well.* To be presented at the annual meeting of the Whole Language Umbrella, Washington, DC.

Peterson, M., Tamor, L., O'Brien, M., McKenzie, B., Johnson, K., and Sharon, T. (October, 2001). *Welcoming All Our Children Home: The Interdependence of Inclusive Education and Democracy.* Presented at the annual meeting of the Institute for Democracy in Eduction, Athens, OH.

Peterson, M., Widmer, S., Hittie, M., and Tamor, L. (November 16, 2001). *Building Inclusive Schools: We are all the thread and the needle.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Anaheim California.

Peterson, M., Widmer, S., Hittie, M., and Tamor, L. (November 16, 2001). *Inclusive Classrooms as Inclusive Communities.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Anaheim California.

Peterson, M., Ntiri, G., Freeman, M., and Murphy, S. (December, 1998). *Building community circles in Detroit.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Washington.

Peterson, M. and Gibson, R. (October, 1998). *Whole schooling for a democratic society.* Whole Schooling Forum. Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Peterson, M. and Murphy, S., and Ntiri, G. *Building community circles. A one and one half day training seminar.* June 25-26, 1998. Detroit, Michigan.

Ross, W., Gibson, R., Baber, C., Sleby, K., Peterson, M Pruyn, M., Douglas, R., Vinson, K. (November 19-21, 1999). *The Rouge Forum: Teaching for Democracy, Equality, and Social Justice.* National Council of Social Studies. Orlando, Florida.

Tamor, L. (July, 2002) *Whole Language: It's More Inclusive than You May Realize.* To be presented at the annual meeting of the Whole Language Umbrella, Washington, DC.

Tamor, L. and Peterson, M. (May, 2001). *Inclusive Education and Progressive Education: What is the Relationship?* Response to discussion at the Progressive Education Summit sponsored by the John Dewey Project on Progressive Education , Bloomington, IN

Recognition

College of Education, Wayne State University. Faculty involved in the project were invited to make a presentation at the Faculty Retreat of the Teacher Education Division of the College of Education on Whole Schooling and this research project to provide a framework for discussion of implications for improving the teacher education program.

Nomination for Urban Impact award. The College of Education has nominated the Whole Schooling Research Project and Consortium for the Urban Impact award of the Council of Great City Colleges of Education.

Project Impact

Hamilton Elementary School. This school was involved in many exemplary practices. However, we were interested in assisting staff in strengthening inclusion in their building. They had co-teaching in many classes for students with mild disabilities and were including several students with autism and one student with severe multiple disabilities. However, the school also housed three special education classes for students with "educable mental retardation" (EMI) and severe learning disabilities. In addition, other students with severe disabilities and moderate disabilities residing in the neighborhoods served by the school were sent to special education programs other schools. As part of ongoing data collection and school observations, we engaged in the following activities: (1) dialogue with the principal and staff ,continuing to query people regarding their opinions and suggesting options for consideration, (2) connecting the school with two other project schools to allow staff to visit each other's schools, (3) a full staff focus group to discuss inclusion and these issues, (4) a focus group and ongoing informal dialogue with support staff ; and (5) involving staff in a multi-school working group on 'multi-level teaching'.

Westover, Michigan. In this school, staff has had ongoing intensive and personal interaction and support with key leaders in the building who have supported inclusion and are interested in strengthening inclusion in the building. As part of the involvement of the project, the school narrowly passed an important school bond issue and a project staff member was invited to be co-grand marshall of a community parade. These interactions provided both opportunity for understanding school dynamics at a deep level as well as to support positive change in the school.

Urban Cluster. Three urban schools– Bonaventure, Hoover, and Hastings Elementary Schools –adopted the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as their framework for school reform. We linked these schools with two schools involved in the research project for site visits and expected ongoing supportive relationships as these schools pursued inclusion and other Whole Schooling practices.

Meadowview Elementary. Project staff were active in partnering with teachers we came to know in this school. On the border of Detroit, with a multi-racial, mixed socio-economic status student population, Meadowview experienced change from district administration that increased student

referrals for special education and eliminated some exemplary practices, most notably looping and multi-age instruction. We engaged in dialogue with school staff, made presentations, and facilitated problem-solving with the entire staff in meetings. Despite changes, Meadowview continues to provide a model program of inclusive education and many university students and staff from other schools visit this school to observe its practices.

Buckley Elementary In the Fall of 2000, project staff were invited to assist Buckley Elementary School in becoming Detroit's first inclusive school. Staff development sessions were held every other week during the school day and consultation held with the school principal and special education support teacher. Buckley has also joined with Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling and has connected with other schools.

Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling. In February of 2001, project staff and leadership of two schools invited twelve schools to form the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling as a program of the Whole Schooling Consortium. This effort was a direct outgrowth of the research project involving several project schools, including Hamilton and Armstrong Primary, who provided the initial leadership. The Network has developed a substantive strategic plan, held several conferences, and facilitated school to school interactions and visitations, all towards the goal of strengthening inclusive education in each school and promoting inclusive education in the state.

School administrator and parent – researcher dialogue at multi-level teaching forum sponsored by the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling.

Whole Schooling Consortium. We have invited others in the Whole Schooling Consortium to participate in the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling. We have shared initial learnings from this project and encouraged individuals to join the work of the Whole Schooling Consortium. Active engagement for collaborative work is underway from individuals and schools in the following states: Ohio, New York, Florida, California, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Washington, and New Mexico.

Project products published via the Whole Schooling Consortium

Harting, C. (2000). Authentic, multi-level teaching: Using best practices in inclusive teaching. Field study report. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University, College of Education.

Peterson, M. (2000). Key elements in building inclusive schools. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Peterson, M. (2000). Whole schooling: Towards a guide for action planning. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., and Gibson, R. (1998). Whole schooling: Education for a democratic society. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Peterson, M., Feathers, K., and Beloin, K. (1998) Inclusive literacy learning: A whole language partnership. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.
Peterson, M. and Tamor, L. (2001). Authentic, multi-level teaching. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Other products.

Web site: http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/WSC.html This site on Whole Schooling includes information regarding the Whole Schooling Research Project and the Summer Institutes. We expect to add information about findings in schools as the project progresses. On this site, the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling has its own web presence: http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/MI-NIS.html

Michigan Team Observations

by School, Researcher, and School Year Spring 1999 – Summer, 2001

Researchers	Elementary Schools														High Schools			
	Avery		Armstrong		Urban Cluster		Evergreen		Hamilton		Meadowview		Westover		Drummond		Rogers	
	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01
Holly Feen		1					2	3		3	2				3		3	2
Rich Gibson			3					4				3			4			
Rod Moeller																	7	
Lynne Pennachini										7								
Michael Peterson				8		20	14			8	8	14					8	8
Melissa Silagy		1									3							3
Lynne Tamor		4									2	1						2
TOTAL	0	6	3	8	20	0	14	7	0	18	15	15	3	0	7	0	18	15

Wisconsin Team Observations

by School, Researcher, and School Year Spring 1999 – Spring 2001

Researchers	Elementary Schools										Midde Schools				High Schools	
	Frank		Gilman		Lily		Lincoln		Oconto		Colby		Walker International		Verona	
	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01
Kim Beloin	9	12	2	0	3	0	2	1	3	0	3	0	2	1		
Paula DeHart	2	0	6	5	5	4	1	1	2	1	5	5	1	1	1	1
Nancy Proctor	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	7	7	0	0	7	5	2	1
Joanne Suomi	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	6	6
Michele Ziegler	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0
TOTAL	13	12	10	5	12	4	13	6	15	8	10	5	11	7	13	8

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WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

III. MICHIGAN TEAM SUMMARY FINDINGS

The Five Principles Of Whole Schooling

From one perspective, the Whole Schooling Research project has validated the Whole Schooling framework as a comprehensive, valuable way to understand how school cultures are built where all children are included in a learning process, and the ways in which children are excluded and their learning diminished. We have come to understand just how interactive are the different principles and practices of whole schooling.

From another perspective, our research has served to clarify, deepen, and sharpen our understanding of philosophies and practices that support inclusive schooling, deepening our original understanding of the principles of Whole Schooling, suggesting additional considerations that build on and strengthen the original framework. Our research data point to the centrality and importance of democracy at multiple levels, particularly school-wide and classroom practices in creating inclusive schools. We have come to believe that building an inclusive school is impossible unless staff collaborate democratically and also promote democracy among students. Two key components, however, may need to be made explicit in the next articulation of the Whole Schooling principles, though they can be considered reasonable parts of existing principles: (1) design and use of space in the class and the school, including the use of assistive technology, and (2) assessment of student learning.

Interactions
Inclusive Education and Schooling Practices

Inclusive education is not a matter of having one or two children with disabilities, even significant disabilities, be 'included' successfully in a school over one or more years. The key is moving beyond such isolated happenings, often born of the influence of persistent parents, to build a culture of inclusive schooling.

The Five Principles of Whole Schooling have both formed a hypothesis and a lens for seeking to observe complexities of schools. As cultures in schools are formed, two focal points

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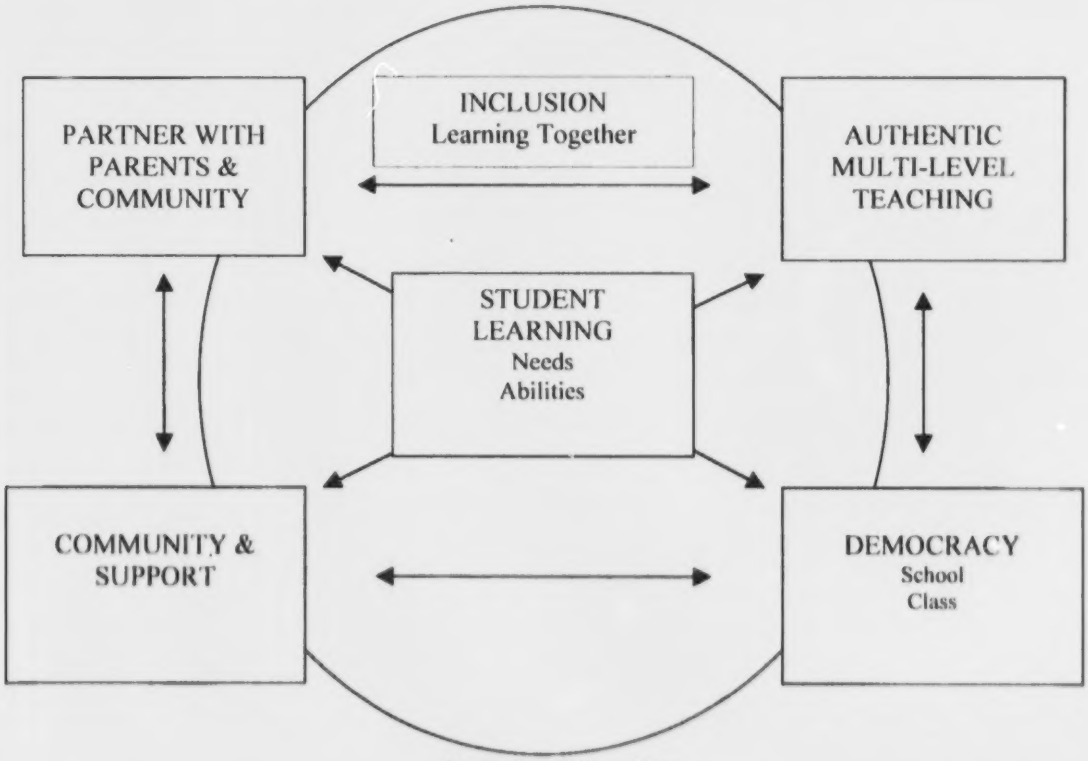
are key: (1) interactions, patterns, or ways of being that pervade *the total school* – sometimes administrative actions that affect all members of the school community or the structure of support services across the building; at other times, norms of behavior, understood language, mannerisms and ways of talking among teachers, all of which constitute what we would call a 'culture' in a school; and (2) similarly, the way in which teachers, students, parents, and others interact in an *individual classroom*.

Inclusive schooling is a function of the interactions of philosophy, attitude, and practice associated with what we have called the five principles of Whole Schooling. This dynamic interaction is illustrated in the graphic below. Approaches to teaching, partnering with parents, support, dynamics of decision-making and sharing of power, and the building of community in the classroom and school all work together in ways that either supports or hinders students with diverse abilities and needs learning together. This conclusion contradicts the prevalent view that characteristics of the individual student are considered as the 'fault' and 'reason' for the lack of inclusion. To put it simply, in a genuinely inclusive school, there is no such thing as a student with a disability who is an "inclusion student"; rather, teachers build classroom learning communities where all students are "inclusion students".

The interactions of what occurs in the classroom and what occurs throughout the school and the local community are complex, but very real. As we explore effective practices in schools for all children, we will constantly attend to these interactions. The chart illustrates graphically this interaction.

Table III – 1: Elements of an Inclusive School and Classroom



Inclusive Education:
III-2

Inclusive education is highly influenced by race and class. Specifically, the lower the socio-economic group, the higher the concentration of children of color, the more likely that segregated educational options are the norm, and the more behavioral concerns lead to exclusionary practices. It has been most difficult to identify schools with significant numbers of children of color who have any close approximation of Whole Schooling practices. Except for the schools actually included in the study, the small handful of such schools who nominated themselves engaged in pull-out practices and very retrogressive curriculum practices – heavy reliance on worksheets, straight rows or desks, control of behavior, and major emphasis on keeping students quiet and in their seats. Even in these schools, we found evidence of tracking by perceived ability level.

Effective inclusive education of students with disabilities, mild through severe, depends upon the effectiveness of three key interacting variables: (1) authentic, multi-level teaching, (2) support for teachers and students by other adults in the classroom; and (3) the building of community and student-to-student social structures in the classrooms.

Several corollary findings are further evident. The best practices associated with each of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling are mutually reinforcing. For example, authentic, multi-level instruction virtually requires effective community building and peer support where adult support strengthens both.

However, in some cases there are interactive trade-offs. For example, in some situations adult support was so strong that children were given little opportunity, modeling, or instruction in learning how to work with and help one another in a learning process. It is notable that in such instances there often was a reliance on ability grouping, moving away from multi-level teaching. Such strong adult support led to "inclusive" ability groups within the classroom, but a failure of inclusion with respect to the total classroom community.

In general, educators cannot articulate solid philosophies about learning and teaching. This is even more true with respect to inclusion. Teachers have often not thought deeply about why it should or should not be pursued and who suffers if we do not we do not pursue it. In other cases, the comfort level of adults is valued above possibilities for children. The inclusive philosophy felt very fragile, even in most schools with a strong to inclusive education There is a crying need for theoretical and philosophical grounding of teachers that will allow them to look at what is, evaluate it, and develop practices based upon a philosophy that is coherent and consistent.

On the other hand, we also saw evidence that when inclusive education, at whatever level, becomes established as part of the operating structure of the school, even when political dynamics shift these structures may remain relatively stable. That is to say, once inclusion becomes part of a school culture, significant changes such as a change in school leadership, will not necessarily mean a loss inclusive practices, at least in the short run.

In most of the schools we studied, the identification rate of students with disabilities was substantially lower than the state and national norms. School staff expressed a belief that this was

due to effective instruction, in many cases providing exemplars of authentic multi-level instruction, and effective support services in the general education classroom, where individualized help was not dependent upon evaluation and labeling.

Most of the schools that we visited were successfully including students with mild disabilities in general education classes with various models of collaboration and support between general and special education. The greatest difference among schools we saw was their approach to students with moderate to severe disabilities.

In some cases, school districts had adopted board level policies promoting inclusion. In these school districts, however, the school district special education practices seem to have remained very segregated, despite this policy, particularly for students with moderate to severe disabilities. In most schools, students with moderate to severe disabilities were most often educated in segregated classes. Where we saw students with moderate to severe disabilities in general education classrooms, it was typically a result of exceptional advocacy by a parent on behalf of his or her child.

Teachers beliefs and willingness to risk inclusion comes from within, often based on personal experiences of abuse, close family connections to people with disabilities, and other factors apart from their training and experience as teachers. For example, one teacher had many years ago adopted a child with autism and learned gentle teaching strategies that enriched her teacher. Another teacher was abused as a child and articulated a life-long mission to "heal children".

Democracy, Leadership, And Inclusive Education

Schools whose inclusive efforts are motivated primarily by social justice concerns tend to be more successful and resilient than those who view inclusion as a special education program. Commitment to a democratic school environment creates healthy tensions in the effort to establish and maintain strong leadership while at the same time instilling personal empowerment in all members of the school community. A wide variety of leadership and teaching styles can support schools and classrooms operating within the Whole Schooling framework. However, regardless of those styles, creation of a professional community climate where colleagues routinely confer about educational practices and beliefs is a major challenge.

Authentic, Multi-Level Teaching

A major impediment to effective schooling for all children and youth, and to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education, is instruction that presumes that all students are, or should be, on what has come to be called 'grade level'. Such instruction aimed exclusively at a sometimes imaginary "average student" insures that both academically able students and students with greater cognitive limitations will not be taught effectively.

In schools seeking to be inclusive, educators are trying different strategies to deal with ability differences within the general education classroom, rather than segregating students according to intellectual or academic ability. These strategies include stable ability grouping (within and across classes), adapting curriculum, differentiated instruction, and what we have termed authentic multi-level teaching. We were concerned as we saw teachers grouping children within the class by presumed abilities, thus re-recreating segregation within the classroom. Adapting curriculum, while a move in a more inclusive direction, assumes that the existing curricular goals, methods, and outcomes are established and that individualized adaptations are the only route to teaching a broader range of students.

Observing teachers who were highly effective at instructing students with vastly differing levels of ability together made us conceptualize a different way of thinking about dealing with difference – designing lessons from the beginning that would allow students to work together on common projects, but at their own level of ability. Such effective instruction was always centered on authentic, meaningful, relevant tasks rather than direct skills instruction or simulated activities designed to appear authentic but which were actually contrived for schoolwork with no effort to insure student ownership of the task.

Through observations and almost two years of dialogue forums with a small group of teachers, we were able to sketch out principles and key instructional strategies for authentic

Table III-2: Designing for Diversity
Domains And Individualized Adaptations

	Academic	**Emotional/ Behavioral**	**Physical**
Authentic, Multi-Level Learning	Authentic instruction Project learning Micro-society Multiple intelligences	Build community Promote caring Encourage friendships. Teach social skills and "emotional intelligence"	Heterogeneous grouping. Space for wheelchairs Use multiple learning modalities
Adapting	Advanced projects Use drama to teach social studies. Provide additional help and support. Read stories to students with reading difficulties.	Identify interests. Understand needs & communication. Provide positive alternatives. Peer support. Circles of friends.	Talking computer for a blind student. Rearrange books so student in wheelchair can reach them.
Evaluate & Revise	Incorporate drama and art in all subjects.	Use circles of friends to build community.	Use talking computers for all students.

multi-level teaching, as well as to provide examples from a variety of classrooms. Combined with strategies to build community in a classroom where students assist, collaborate with, and encourage one another, and specialized support services from professionals working as a team to assist classroom teachers, authentic multi-level instruction holds great promise for creating

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classrooms where all children are challenged at their own ability levels while learning to work as a heterogeneous, inclusive community.

While we have sketched strategies for authentic multi-level teaching and have documented many examples, much needs to be done to investigate this broad approach in greater detail, including connecting with the professional teaching standards put forth by the national professional educational organizations, creating guidelines across grade levels and educational disciplines, and collecting more detailed examples across the full range of curricular activities.

Building Community

Responding Pro-actively to Social and Behavioral Needs

Effective teachers put much energy into building a sense of community in their classrooms. Effective schools support teachers in this process and engage in school-wide efforts to reinforce community, making parents and children feel welcome, facilitating mutual support and encouragement to staff. Community building occurs through a wide range of strategies that are interactive with and complementary to academic instruction and learning. As one teacher said, "We teach academics through community and build community through academics". Clearly, schools and classrooms in which community is built provide an environment that is more conducive to the mental health of children, thus helping to prevent emotional and behavioral difficulties and providing a range of pro-active approaches when problematic behavior occurs.

Pro-active approaches to dealing with behavioral challenges that support ongoing inclusion are founded on a solid commitment to all children and a philosophy of inclusion. When a culture of commitment to children with high emotional needs is not established, pressure to remove such children grows, serving to weaken overall community in the building, moving the culture of the school from community towards punishment and rejection. This dynamic is heightened in schools with many lower income children and children of color.

Schools and teachers who are committed to keeping children in their classrooms and buildings develop a wide range of strategies to make this happen, building on the strengths of the students, and providing support to both student and staff. School-wide strategies include child-study teams that focus their energy on positive strategy development rather than documentation for exclusion, use of specialists and paraprofessionals to provide support to the teacher in a team effort, and crisis teams that are on call as needed when situations arise that the teacher cannot handle. Classroom-based strategies include engagement of children in problem-solving with adult support through classroom meetings; teacher to student dialogue and peer mediators; focus on helping children think about their behavior and learning different ways to handle their emotions or express their needs, rather than on control, punishments or rewards; looking at student behavior as expression of student needs and seeking

ways to meet those needs; seeing through the problematic behaviors to the humanity of the student and seeking to build on the student's strengths.

Teachers who were strong community builders were more likely to struggle to support and include students with challenging behaviors than teachers who sought to manage their classes through control, punishment, and rewards. However, this linkage was not automatic and depended upon the teacher's development of a philosophical commitment to inclusion. In this domain, as well as others, the dynamics that helped to create such a commitment were not clear.

Support in the Inclusive School

Support by adults is most effective when it occurs in the general education classroom and aids the general education teachers both in developing effective, authentic, multi-level instruction for all students and in helping to problem-solve on behalf of specific children. However, implementation of effective support is highly complex. A wide range of models of support is being utilized that range in their purpose and format.

Teachers judged that inclusive outcomes were better when one of the two following conditions prevailed. When both conditions were present, the process and outcomes for both teachers and students was judged to be highly satisfactory: (1) supports provided in the class by a respected colleague; and (2) effective teaching using a range of teaching methods, typically involving cooperative learning, hands-on projects, a range of strategies for presenting information, and adaptations based on ability levels and learning styles.

Support is provided by a range of individuals, some funded through special education such as special education teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and paraprofessionals. Other support personnel may be funded through gifted education, at risk or Title I, bilingual, and other programs, or through general school funds.

Most effective schools developed a *support team* that developed building-wide, coordinated support services including coordination and collaboration among support staff in individual classes and with respect to individual students. Such schools operated *child study* meetings where teachers had the opportunity to obtain input from other staff. Support staff most effectively provided assistance in the context of the general education classroom. We observed four approaches being used to guide support services: (1) remediation, (2) adaptations (3) teacher need, and (4) collaborative multi-level teaching. We judged the latter two as the most effective. Within these two approaches, students were most often heterogeneously grouped and staff involved in collaboration, designing lessons that worked for all students, rather than one teacher 'teaching' and the other 'helping'.

Students explore the idea of community while watching young chickens just hatched.

The philosophy and resulting practices of support staff, as well as issues of competence and personality, impacted on the partnership between support staff and general education

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teachers. Frequently, even in generally effective schools, general education teachers relied on a child-centered, holistic approach while many support staff were trained in a pull-out, deficit-based, behavioral approach to instruction. This caused tension and difficulty. Other special education teachers and support staff, however, provided significant leadership for professional development and seeding of innovative teaching practice from one classroom to another. Special educators, psychologists, speech therapists, and other support personnel who begin to work towards multi-level teaching and community building with the general education teachers can be a powerful resource. Such individuals have the potential to act as staff development agents, helping to move highly successful and effective practices from one classroom to another as they work in several rooms in a building.

Paraprofessionals served many roles, in some cases essentially helping to segregate the student from other students in the general education classroom, in other cases playing a facilitating role for inclusion and collaborating in teaching all students in the class. Again, neither teachers nor paraprofessionals typically had any training or support to help them define their roles and working relationships.

In most project schools, some version of co-teaching between general and special education teachers was being used. We saw various models. In some cases, special education teachers functioned largely as "helpers" in the general education rooms. In these cases, students with disabilities tended to be more separated and segregated in the context of the general education class. In other cases, special education teachers were more integrally involved in delivery of instruction. In most such situations, the general and special education teachers regularly switched roles between providing the lead instruction and providing support to students.

WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

IV. MICHIGAN TEAM SCHOOL STORIES

In this section, we provide a school-by-school description, organized around the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, of each school's implementation of inclusive education. In the next section, we conduct a cross-schools analysis synthesizing our findings. The intensive study schools were those in which we spent intensive time for at least two years of the project period in Michigan. The data from these schools is the basis for most of our findings. Short-term schools were schools in which we spent some time for one year of the project. The comparison schools were those associated with related research and development projects. We spent a range of one to three years working as participant observers in a change process in these schools.

Tables on the following three pages provide additional summary information about these schools. Table 2 illustrates demographic information for both intensive study and short-term schools while Table 3 provides a side-by-side summary comparison of practices of inclusive education, instruction, support, leadership, and other practices for the five intensive study schools and one short-term study school. We will first provide a brief summary of each school followed by a detailed description of each of the intensive study schools moving from proximity to the city of Detroit to rural areas. This is followed by brief descriptors of short-term and comparison schools.

Table IV-1
INTENSIVE STUDY SCHOOLS

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Elementary	1	1	2
Middle School			
High School		1	

SHORT-TERM SCHOOLS

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Elementary	1		1
Middle School			
High School		1	

COMPARISON SCHOOLS

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Elementary	4		
Middle School			

Short-term schools.

We spent less than a year observing in three schools in our study: Avery in Detroit (elementary), Westover Elementary in the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula, and Drummond High School, a school in a suburb in Macomb County north of Detroit. In the case of Westover, the observer assigned to that school moved to another state; at Drummond High School, a new principal was hired and he was not interested in pursuing participation in the project. We replaced these two schools with the Detroit elementary school. These schools are briefly described below.

Comparison schools.

During the project period, researchers were also involved in related school reform and professional development projects in three elementary schools in Detroit. These schools had committed to becoming inclusive schools and moving towards Whole Schooling practices. However, it was clear early on that these schools were far from utilization of most of the practices associated with the Whole Schooling principles. Along with observations conducted by students in schools throughout the metropolitan area, these schools provided important contrasts to the intensive study schools that were very helpful.

Intensive study schools.

We spent the most intensive time in four elementary schools and one high school in this study. Below, we describe these schools and their practices in some detail. We begin with a brief summary below.

Meadowview Elementary is near the border of Detroit in a multi-racial school with a free and reduced lunch rate in 1999-2000 school year of 53%. The school has 472 students where students with mild through moderate disabilities are fully included. The two special education teachers, speech therapist, and Title I personnel provide most support in the general education classes. The school has emphasized multi-age classes, looping, student-led conferences, building community among children, and holistic and project-based learning.

Hamilton Elementary is a K-5 school located in a wealthy near suburb of Detroit. With a high degree of language diversity, the school nevertheless served only a small number of low income children and children of color. The school has worked towards inclusion for some 10 years. A range of support services for students with special needs in the school include two special education teachers, a speech therapist, a gifted education teacher, bilingual education teachers, an early intervention literacy team of teachers and paraprofessionals, and several paraprofessionals assigned to classes with students having more significant disabilities.

Evergreen Elementary is a school in a rural area an hour from Detroit. Housing 800 students, it is the only elementary school in this small district. The school has committed to including all students with disabilities, serves mostly White children, and has a small, but rising, free and reduced lunch rate of 19%. Two special education teachers provide support in clustered 'inclusion' classes in upper elementary, providing 1/2-day support in each class, with a paraprofessional providing support the other 1/2 day. In lower elementary, multi-age classes and paraprofessionals provide a supportive environment.

Armstrong Primary is a K-3 school in a very rural area serving mostly White children but in an area of high poverty, having a free and reduced lunch rate of 56%. The school has committed to including all children with disabilities. A team of Specialists – special education teacher, speech therapist, occupational therapist, Title I teacher, counselor – provide in-class supports along with paraprofessionals assigned to most classrooms.

Rogers High School. Located in a near suburb of Detroit, this school includes students with mild disabilities in clustered, co-taught classes between general and special education. Staff have developed over the last ten years a cohesive positive working relationship between general and special education teachers. A class of students with severe and multiple impairments is also located in the building. While these students spend most of their time in a special education classroom, they go into general education classes throughout the day.

SHORT-TERM SCHOOLS

Avery

Urban Elementary magnet school.

Avery was initially established as a Waldorf school, under a previous superintendent. Teachers participated in Waldorf training, but because the curriculum, in particular the reading curriculum, differed so much from that of Detroit Public Schools, the school never fully implemented the Waldorf philosophy and methods, but described itself as being "Waldorf inspired." At the time that the school joined the study, all connections to the Waldorf approach had been formally abandoned and most materials had been removed. Only one staff member remained "from the Waldorf days." The school continues to implement some practices from the Waldorf era, however, using brain-based and multiple intelligence theories in their curriculum and philosophy of teaching. Unique about this school is the fact that the art teacher serves as the lead teacher, and art is used to teach all academic subjects.

A primary component of the curriculum is a partnership formed with Wayne State University called "Art Centered Education" (ACE). The school partners with the university and an arts group. Representatives from dance and theater come into the classes and teach aspects of the curriculum through their art. The principal at Avery is inclined toward inclusion of students with special needs; however, she is functioning in within a school district that has traditionally segregated the vast majority of students with significant special needs.

The most outstanding quality of this school is the leadership role of the art teacher and the central focus on art. Certainly, there is evidence of attempts to teach and adapt for diversity using art. There is also a strong focus on the use of arts to help connect family through ritual and traditional craft. For example, the students did not celebrate Halloween, but instead celebrated Ancestors Day, in which students dressed as one of their ancestors and completed programming on this theme. There are approximately five large programs per year including Black History Month, Christmas, and an annual "extravaganza." The school uses thematic instruction linking arts and academics around a particular theme. Students write stories for a newspaper. A recent unit was "cooperative economics" in which students made things to sell. After school, there is also a program for artistically gifted and talented students, as well as extensive programming for all interested students. Another recent unit involved reading Harry Potter. Mandy, the art teacher, coordinated this. Students kept their copy of the book as

well as a black gel pen and notebook for fun notes. Students had to write down and look up vocabulary works and also design their own bookmark.

The principal expressed concern that the students with special needs were bused to this magnet school, whereas other students lived in the neighborhood or had parents who were committed to the school's approach and therefore provided their own transportation. The special education students, on the other hand, were merely assigned to the school by the central office and did not necessarily have parents with any interest in the special nature of this school. As a result, the students with special education labels left on their buses immediately after school and did not participate in the after school programs that were a vital part of this school's community-building effort. As a group, their parents were far less involved with the school than were the general education parents. Since after school activities were frequently integrated with activities taking place during the school day, this situation created an additional challenge to genuine inclusion of students with disabilities.

Drummond High School

Semi-rural metropolitan suburb.

Drummond High School rises out of a rural landscape like a postmodern fortress. The imposing stone and glass structure stands stark in a field that only a short time ago must have been someone's farm. Most students and faculty are proud of their contemporary structure. On our first visit, we were only certain this was a school because the flashing sign outside the building proclaimed its name. The front door, not easily noticeable, opened to a large commons area in the center of the building. Here students eat lunch and participate in school wide functions. Banners and art projects hang from a third floor above the commons area. Inside, the corridors are carpeted; the walls seem to have fresh paint, looking barren, yet clean and new.

Drummond is a suburb approximately 45 minutes northwest of the metropolitan Detroit area. It is a predominately white area, with a population of mixed ethnic descent, comprised of people from working class backgrounds. At the time of our study, there was a surge in population in the county. A large number of upper middle-income homes were under construction, looking almost as out of place as the school building itself. According to the principal, many of these homes require the income of two parents.

The Road Toward An Inclusive School

In response to the increase in the population, Drummond High School was built in 1995. It was conceived with a focus on engaging students in learning through interdisciplinary programming with teams of teachers working together. The original staff was drawn from neighboring schools and had the luxury of meeting to plan and discuss their vision prior to coming to the new school. The teachers seem proud of the simplicity and power of their mission statement, "Drummond is a place for all to learn." Teachers we interviewed report feeling proud of their school and believe many of the components of a democratic school are in place, despite the fact that not all teachers embrace team teaching and the inclusive teaching philosophy.

Before coming to Drummond, two very strong teachers had been talking about their experiences with students in special education. They had found that students in special education typically had low expectations for themselves. Once at Drummond, these teachers advocated team teaching classes comprised of a mix of special education and general education students,

but unfortunately, not enough teachers were willing to try this. As a compromise, the school adopted a model under which two general education teachers and one special education teacher worked together as a team, with the two groups of students assigned to their team. The special education teacher is not known by the students to be a special education teacher, and in fact, this teacher works with all the students in the team. The school itself was designed so that four classroom groups could be clustered together as an integrated team, with movable walls between them.

At the time of our study, the situation had evolved so that the ninth grade had two four-teacher teams of English, Social Studies, Science, and Math teachers. The special education teacher worked with both teams. In the tenth grade, English and History classes were team-taught. The twelfth grades also have some teams of teachers working together. The eleventh grades do not use interdisciplinary teaming due to problems in scheduling. (While teachers favoring the team approach had hoped to move towards block scheduling, political battles have prevented this from happening to date.)

Integrated classes at Drummond were comprised of honors, general education, and special education students. Starting in the tenth grade, students could sign a contract to carry an enriched academic load in History, English, Chemistry, and Government. Students pursue studies independently with support of faculty, engaging in reading articles on a topic, and then writing about it. Students must maintain an A average to be in the program; however, this is usually easy to do since they get extra points for their extra work as part of the honors program. If they do not do the work, they are simply not in the honors program. This way of conceiving the honors program results in raising the standards in all classes. It also gets beyond the potential for a small group of teachers to head up an elite group of students. The honors students also seem to benefit from having less academically inclined students in their classes. One example of this a situation in which an honors student and another student considered "at-risk" became friends and worked together on a project. The at-risk student did not write well but had a passion and a voice in her writing. The honors student wrote well technically but lacked a passionate voice. Both of these students worked well together and complemented one another.

One challenge to this model is the desire on the part of some parents to retain the traditional system of honors classes. One parent explicitly stated he did not want his child in class sitting next to a special education student. Another challenge comes from the teachers themselves. During the 2000-2001 school year, the science teachers (with the exception of the two science teachers who team in the ninth grade) initiated a major debate over the current system of honors election. They wanted to have traditional, separate honors classes. This was rejected by a vote of the staff and the new principal, Mary, upheld the vote.

In the same way the honors students are integrated within the general education classes, so too are students in special education integrated within general education classes. Initially, the main concern was that the students in special education would disrupt learning for the others; however, this has not been the case. The first principal believed students are disruptive when they are bored, so that high quality instruction would decrease disruptive behavior among all students.

During our first visit to Drummond, we met with the first principal, Abe, a soft-spoken man who is seen by staff as facilitative and supportive. At the end of our first year, Abe resigned and was replaced by a principal who was less vocal about inclusion. Initially some of the staff thought Mary may not have shared the vision of inclusion and integrated teaching teams; however, the outcome of the honors debate indicated otherwise. The staff now believes he may

be motivated by political concerns within the school board and administration, rather than opposition to the original mission of the school. They notice that "when push comes to shove, he has supported the progressive-minded teachers" (a teacher, personal communication, May 13, 2002). Because, at the beginning of his tenure at Drummond, Mary did not meet with us despite several attempts on our part to do so, this report will describe Drummond under the tenure of Abe.

Include All

Drummond, as has been described, is a school in which students with diverse abilities (honors through special education) enroll in classes together, and where teachers teach in interdisciplinary teams. For students who had been labeled as special education students in previous schools, their first year at Drummond is spent learning new responsibilities and how to advocate for themselves. For example, in previous schools students understood that because they were in special education they did not have to do homework. Thus, they were trained to have low expectations for themselves. At Drummond, students are nurtured to understand their abilities and to be responsible for their work.

In addition to this model of teaching, a building-wide awards program is open to all students. The purpose is "to promote, recognize and reward excellence in performance in all areas of the school curriculum" (Drummond Award System). A points system allows students to accumulate points awarded grades in academic subjects, participation in clubs, service groups, and athletics. In other words, the 75 points necessary to be awarded a Drummond letter can be earned through participation in athletics, in clubs or service groups, or through grade point.

Many different programs comprise this school, so that students have the opportunity to contribute to the school culture in many ways. A very nice restaurant at the school is run by students in the Career and Technical Studies programs. Another building was being built on the school campus by the construction majors. Once completed the building was sold and moved to land the purchaser had bought. There is a preschool program for students' and teachers' children that has its own wing. In other words, one need not be an athlete to be popular or to have a special role at Drummond--there are many special programs that are highlighted and valued and in which students may derive a sense of identity and in which they can feel proud to participate.

In terms of the school community, the building uses the concept of an "idea generator." This provides an opportunity for all stakeholders (parents, students, staff) to identify problems and provide solutions. People in all groups have taken advantage of this opportunity. In addition, parents and students serve on the School Improvement Team alongside school staff.

Instruction

At Drummond, heavy emphasis is placed on faculty collegiality. By participating in teaching teams, teachers have given up their comfortable solitude. They plan together and teach together. As at Rogers, it is up to the team to decide how they will carry out the actual mode of instruction. In some teams, we observed two teachers teaching together. In other teams, we observed one teacher taking the lead for certain subject areas, while the other teacher stayed in the background, often reading or grading papers, yet available if needed. Negotiating co-teaching arrangements requires a lot of discussion and compromise between the teaming teachers.

In addition to the integrated teams, adaptations are made for students when necessary. Adaptations can include tests being read orally, and word banks being given for multiple-choice questions. Correct notes are distributed before tests, so that if a student having difficulty with taking notes would still have a full set of notes prior to an exam. Tutoring is also available at the school on Saturdays.

Parent And Community Partnerships

A Booster Club is not affiliated with any particular student group and is committed to the success of every student, not just those involved in extracurricular activities. The intent with all programs has been to support the needs of every student.

A social studies teacher was particularly proud of a new independent study class that she felt exemplified the concepts of democracy she tried to model and teach. In this class, students select their own project. They sign a contract about what they will study and the outcomes they will achieve to demonstrate what they have learned. Students may elect to take this class twice.

Leadership, Democracy, Professional Development

During our visits to Drummond, we were struck by the degree to which staff seemed to own the culture of the school, policies, etc. There was no sense of administration versus faculty, but rather of a complex democratic process among the staff themselves. The sense of collegiality began with the new teachers. There were teacher-mentors for new staff members, and "cracker barrel" discussion groups for teachers new to the profession. The staff took it upon themselves to meet at homes to talk about issues. Relationships had been established between Drummond staff and faculty at Wayne State, so that there was an also opportunity to participate in professional development outside of Drummond.

Lessons Learned, Questions To Ask

It was very evident that several strong teachers and a principal committed to an inclusive vision did much to realize that vision. Yet, as with any changes in tradition, there were challenges to address and resolve. For example, attaining the benefits of working in inclusive teams required teachers to redefine their roles. Not all teachers have wanted to participate in integrated teams. Even among those who did choose to become involved, challenges still existed. One special education teacher, for example, needed to adjust to the idea that her partner teacher called a parent. Although this was helpful to her, it was also hard to give up being the only teacher who had contact with parents.

The non-academic subject teachers could also have been included more in the integrated teams. Both art teachers felt they were "being dumped on" with what they perceived to be more than the average number of students with behavior problems. Had they been included more in the planning, they might have bought into the inclusive philosophy. Instead, their exclusion may have contributed to their lack of motivation to embrace a team model of teaching. A social studies teacher agrees "the art teachers are dumped on when math failures are prevented from continuing on in a math class at the end of first semester." This teacher feels "the math department is the biggest source of unofficial tracking at Drummond" (teacher, personal communication, May 13, 2002).

In other ways, the arts are being included in the teaching teams. For instance in 2001-02, one of the ninth grade teams includes all of the band and choir students. In addition, the idea to have a Spanish and a French team has been raised. What has held this back is the perception that scheduling would be impossible.

Questions about how and to what extent the inclusive efforts can be continued when not all teachers share this vision remain to be answered. Hopefully, the logistics for implementing this complex system of inclusion of honors, general education and special education students in teaching teams will be worked out. Drummond High School is engaged in some important and interesting experiments in the midst of a conservative county. The pressure to conform to the traditions of other high schools in the county may have contributed to Al's decision to leave. Mary seems to be attempting to support traditions at Drummond that have proven successful, while balancing negotiations and communications with the school board and community who may be less familiar with the philosophy of inclusion.

COMPARISON SCHOOLS

Urban Cluster

Urban elementary schools

An allied project of the Whole Schooling Research Project, a project that provided interactive understandings, was a three-year intense involvement with three schools in one area of Detroit: Bonaventure, Hoover, and Hastings Elementary Schools. These schools came together as a cluster to participate in the school reform initiative of the Detroit Public Schools called the 21st Century Initiative, a major effort funded through the Annenberg Foundation. The group was organized by the principal of Bonaventure Elementary School and Michael Peterson.

From the beginning, the schools agreed to use the Whole Schooling framework as the centerpiece of their school reform efforts. Ultimately, however, the schools were required to choose a school reform model that was identified in a catalogue compiled by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. They intentionally worked to select a model consistent with Whole Schooling and initial work was designed to be a collaborative effort of faculty associated with the Whole Schooling Consortium and staff of Accelerated Schools,

the model selected.

In the fall of 1999, the cluster was one of 10 in Detroit to receive four year funding for a comprehensive school renewal effort to transform teaching and learning in their schools. For one year, Wayne State faculty members Michael Peterson and Kathi Tarant-Parks worked collaboratively as members of the Whole Schooling Consortium. Michael provided support to all three schools related to movement towards inclusive education. Kathi did this in Hoover Elementary School as part of her primary role as an external coach for the Accelerated Schools Project. She spent much time helping teachers to develop innovative approaches to literacy based on her work combining inclusive education with the Early Literacy Project approaches. They collaborated with Susan Florio-Ruane of the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) who had been working with teachers at Bonaventure Elementary to develop a Literacy Circle, a study and support group of teachers to help improve literacy instruction.

Unfortunately, the great promise eventually disintegrated because administrative leadership in several schools did not support substantive change with respect to either literacy instruction or inclusive education. However, much was learned in this effort that has helped to inform an understanding of how to create quality schools, as well as the barriers presented by attitudes, use of power, and purely administrative decision-making. Below, we would like to describe how this work played out and describe lessons learned along the way.

Bonaventure Elementary

Bonaventure Elementary School has a population of approximately 660 students with classes from Head Start through grade five. It also houses three special needs classrooms. It is a school-wide Title I building offering technological training and skills development, Project Share, after school programs, OmniArts, and history study at the Detroit Historical Museum. Institutional community partnerships include Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Iota Boule Adopt-A- School Program), Michigan State University, Detroit Institute of Arts; National Bank of Detroit In School Program, and Kappa Delta Pi Eastern Michigan University tutoring program. Parental and local community involvement includes the Site-Based Decision - Making Council, the Local School Community Organization, chaperones, and classroom tutors.

Hoover Elementary

Hoover Elementary School has a population of 626 students. This includes five classrooms for students receiving specialized services. Special features and programs at Hoover include After School Tutorial Program, Family Math and Science, Kwanzaa Garden, Starbase, technology projects, and WyTriad. Each classroom is equipped with computers and telephones. Hoover School houses a community health center in conjunction with Mercy Hospital. The Southeast Optimist Club has been a long time partner. The Hoover School family works collaboratively to create a caring, nurturing, and challenging environment for all students. It is also a place where teachers, students, parents, and the community form learning partnerships to help ensure that students flourish in the information age.

Hastings Elementary

Hastings Elementary School has an enrollment of 750 students. The population includes students from the Preschool level through grade five. Hastings also has two classrooms for students receiving specialized services. It incorporates a strong and diverse General Education Program that engages parents and students in homework initiatives. There is a full time MEAP Instructional Specialist; a counselor and social worker together form a Resource Recovery Team. Hastings also has instituted a School-to-Work Program to inform students about the employment process, and an After-School tutorial Program in which high school students assist instructional staff and students.

The schools came together as a cluster in 1998 to work together to improve our schools as part of the 21st Century Initiative of the Detroit Public Schools. Bonaventure Elementary School and faculty of the Whole Schooling Consortium agreed to work together to use the Five Principles of Whole Schooling to improve learning. The schools formed a Cluster Coordinating Team composed of administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and faculty. Per the requirements of the 21st Century Schools initiative, they formed a collaborative working group to begin to plan for school renewal. With support by the faculty of the Whole Schooling Consortium and the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, the cluster developed a 3 1/2 year plan. Some successful efforts occurred in the schools to move towards inclusive education and improved teaching.

- In Bonaventure Elementary School, a special education teacher began in the fall of 1999 to include all her special education students in general education classes. She followed them into these four classes to provide support, consultation, and assistance to the general education teacher. This was one of the first such efforts in the city of Detroit.
- Working with faculty of the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), teachers in Bonaventure Elementary School tried new strategies in literacy learning to engage students in authentic reading and writing. They formed a Literacy Circle in which teachers meet after school to read and discuss methods of improving instruction. In one class, students using these strategies had the highest test scores on a recent standardized test.
- In Hoover Elementary School, teachers began to try new engaging literacy strategies associated with the Early Literacy Project -- morning message, journals, author-sharing, and so forth. According to their teacher, many students were engaging in reading and writing in ways they had not done before.
- In Hoover, cadres were formed for teachers to engage in study and planning related to curriculum, assessment, and discipline. In March of 2000, faculty of the Whole Schooling Consortium met with a small group of teachers who decided to form an ongoing study cadre related to Inclusive Education. They are meeting at periodic 'chat 'n chew' sessions at lunchtime.

- Numerous after school program activities are being initiated by the Coordinators of Communities in Schools program at all three schools to involve parents and community members.

INTENSIVE STUDY SCHOOLS

In this section, we describe in detail the school in which we spent the most time in this study.

Meadowview Elementary School
Close-in metropolitan suburb

The road that divides the city proper from its more affluent suburbs is not just a thoroughfare but also a demographic boundary: It often describes differences in income levels, race, lifestyle, city services, government, and most importantly, public school systems. Meadowview Elementary School is located just north of the city limits. Situated in a surprisingly rural stretch of land, the road leading to Meadowview is dotted with fruit and vegetable stands, and tiny brick and wood frame single-family homes. The school itself sits in a cul-de-sac, surrounded by trees and the "Meadowview Nature Path." To the west, the neighborhood boasts an eclectic mix of homes, and by 2001, a dozen new luxury homes began construction nearby.

School and Community

Meadowview was built in the 1960s as an "open school." Built in the shape of a circle, open classrooms line its circumference, with the gym, library, kitchen, and art room situated in its center. Each classroom has a door leading to the outside; however, the rooms and offices in the interior of the school are windowless. Of the 480 Meadowview students, 55% are African American; 40% are white, and 3% Chaldean (Iraqi Christians). In 1999, six Vietnamese students enrolled. Within its district, the school has the highest level of single parent families, primarily with female heads of households. While 52% of the students qualify for Title I, the district encompasses both the lowest and highest income levels of the district. Some students attending Meadowview live near a wealthy neighboring suburb, and others live in an area of the district that has a large, a low-income, trailer court community. The principal, Tom, believed many students from the latter community resent the closure of a school in their own neighborhood and still resist sending their children to Meadowview.

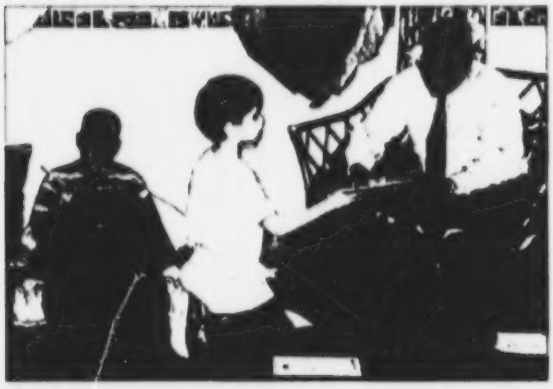
Nineteen classroom teachers comprise the faculty, both new and experienced teachers. In addition, there are an art teacher, a music teacher, a physical education teacher, and a librarian. There are two multi/categorical support teachers, one Title I teacher, one reading clinician, one special needs support teacher, an ESL teacher, a psychologist, a social worker, and a speech

pathologist, in addition to three para-professionals. At the beginning of this study, there were two kindergarten classes, three first grade classes, three second grade classes, one third grade class, one fourth grade class, one fifth grade class, one grades 1-2 multi-age class, one 2-3 multi-age, one grades 3-4 multi-age, one grades 3-4-5 multi-age and one grades 4-5 multi-age classrooms. The new principal, Nancy, has gradually eliminated all multiage classrooms, except for one (grade 1-2), and departmentalized the upper elementary grades.

Becoming An Inclusive School

With a background in counseling and administration, Tom, the school principal at the beginning of this study, was a strong advocate for students and worked diligently to meet the needs of the whole child, emotional and physical as well as academic. Upon beginning his tenure as principal in 1992, Tom found students with special needs were segregated from their non-disabled peers, despite written policies that indicated otherwise. Many of the teachers believed that "differently labeled" children would not be able to work well in general education classrooms. Under Tom's leadership, Meadowview moved from a system of total "pull-out" to one of inclusion. During Tom's tenure, multi-age classes and two-year looped classes provided much of the structure for the inclusion model. "Occasionally students are pulled out of classes to be given additional support, but to do this there must be a very specific objective. When at all possible, students receive support in class" (Tom, interview, March 1999). In 1999-2000, twelve students had labels as special education certified students: four EMI (educably mentally impaired, four LD (learning disabled), one HI (hearing impaired), and four 'labeled at another school'). Children who would elsewhere have been identified as "emotionally impaired" were not given formal labels at Meadowview.

In 1998, the teaching staff began training in the Glasser choice theory model, which emphasizes awareness that all behavior is motivated by wants and that choices are available to students. In classroom situations, for example, if a student acts out, the instructor tries to determine what that child wanted to accomplish by exhibiting that particular behavior.



Support For Learning

Those students identified as having particular needs are supported by the "STAR Team" (support team for students at-risk), which provides supports and collaborates with general education teachers. The team includes two special education teachers, two Title I funded teachers, one teacher funded through a grant for class size reduction, a reading clinician, and a speech therapist. A social worker and school psychologist also work part-time. Finally, a full-time coordinator works provides training and support to children in conflict resolution through a grant with a local hospital. These individuals work as a team to develop collaborative schedules for in-class support. Students are heterogeneously placed in rooms across the school with much collaborative conversation among teachers across grade levels. No special education or other pull-out classes exist. Staff work together to help meet

individualized student needs. One student, for example, has an ear that did not develop on the outside, and consequently, a hearing impairment. Originally, the girl was enrolled in a school for the deaf, but the parents were dissatisfied with this school. Now she is at Meadowview with accommodations including headphones and sound amplification.

Student-directed parent-teacher-student conferences are another important way in which students are empowered. These are not the parent-teacher conferences common at other schools. Student-directed conferences are conferences involving and directed by the object of the conference: the student. Prior to the conference, the teacher reviews the student's progress with the student. Together, the two select the students' best work, and also examples of work that show where the student may need extra direction or support. The work is arranged in a portfolio. At the conference, the student presents his work to his parents, shows his progress, and articulates his goals with his teacher. Any problems or issues are also discussed, so that all three constituents are clear about the plan.

When visiting the school, one will see many smaller examples of the student empowerment that gives Meadowview its unique character. In some classes, children select their classroom seating arrangements. In other classes, teachers select the more unpopular students who in turn select a partner for themselves for collaborative learning activities. Students are paired with one another to check each other's work. Students taking turns leading activities like Calendar Math. There are classroom community meetings are used to discuss issues and solve problems. Extracurricular programs focus on responsibility for others, such as Coats for Kids, and collecting money for medical expenses for children in other countries.

Authentic, Multi-Level Teaching

The teaching approaches of staff are highly conducive to inclusive teaching. A culture of open and active learning has gradually developed over the years. Few teachers have desks arranged in rows. Most use tables where children often work in groups. Reading and writing workshop approaches are used in which children work at their own levels, sometimes alone and sometimes in pairs or small groups, as teachers conference with individual students. Until the 2001-2002 school year, every teacher in the school was involved in either a multi-age classroom or looping, practices that provide a continuity and sense of community among children and a context in which multi-level teaching becomes a natural part of the total curriculum. Many teachers use individualized spelling lists drawn from words misspelled in the students' own writing. Project-based learning is a centerpiece of curriculum. Residents from a local hospital weekly engage children in authentic, hands-on learning regarding health. The school is involved in the Jason Project, a science curriculum that is linked to satellite conferences involving children in data collection and connection with actual scientists conducting investigations. Students select their best work and show parents what they have learned in student-led conferences are used

where students, planned and conducted under the guidance of the teacher. Combined with in-class support, these strategies provide many options for students with differing abilities, needs, and challenges.

One of the most talented teachers in the school, Sandra, consistently demonstrated how she taught for diverse learners. The first time we visited her room, we thought it must be "center time." All the children were doing something different. Looking around the room, two children were playing the game, Maisy. Three were playing cards. Where was the teacher, we wondered. Finally, we found her sitting at a table with a small group of children, giving a spelling test. Some children were sitting at other tables copying spelling words. Sandra explained once spelling words are assigned, the students practice writing the words five times. Eventually, they take turns being individually tested by the teacher. All students have different spelling words, based on their "itty bitty" books-- 3 by 5 inch notebooks in which a dialog takes place between Sandra and the student. The student writes to the teacher, the teacher writes back, taking note of which words are misspelled, but close to being spelled correctly. Those words then become that child's spelling words.

A second teacher, Rhoda, who helps with math, is seated on the floor with some of the students. They are using colored plastic disks, a manila folder divided in thirds of different colors, and are rolling a die. "They don't know it but they are learning to carry." Once they get five disks in one column, they take them away and add one in the middle column.

Just beyond the die rolling, it is calendar time, today directed by Shafik. I knew that because there was a note up on the board that said "Shafik is the special helper today." First, the children sang days of the week to the tune of Adams' Family. Then, there were some questions printed on a piece of green paper from which Shafik could select to ask his "class." In addition, a large chart board hung with some blanks to be filled in. "__ease _ind some time __oday to read Andy's Halloween story." Calendar math resumed: How many days do we have until Keith's birthday? How many days do we have until Halloween?

Calendar math continued: Since today the date was 21 October, the children had to make a square or rectangle with little magnet squares. This was followed by writing in their journals as many ways they could think to make "21". A large shape was drawn on graph paper in the chart board. Children made estimations of how many squares were in the area. Next came perimeter estimations. Finally, all the squares were counted. Children were all to write the area in their math calendar books. Next came the date translated into money. Then they did the date in money. Two sticky dimes and one penny were placed up on the blackboard.

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Building Community

A variety of extra curricular programs provide opportunities for students to be involved in projects that best support their skills and interests. Meadowview's strong emphasis on building community to support learning can be seen in a number of its programs. There is an annual overnight parenting retreat each spring. Here, a bus takes 15 sets of parents to Frankenmuth for workshops, conversation, dinner, and camaraderie. This is provided for only $15.00 per person.

The "Watch Me Grow" program meets on Wednesdays after school to talk about loss, feelings, home issues, and similar issues. There are PTA meetings with community dinners. A newsletter is published monthly. There are numerous assemblies for the whole school covering a variety of issues. In a recent assembly, just after the shooting of a six-year-old girl in Flint, students discussed school violence. Campfire girls and Voyager are summer programs, and the community service project, Make a Difference Day, takes place in the spring.

Another special project was the Wayne State service-learning project that was initiated as the result of the Whole Schooling project. For the service-learning project, students were selected by teachers based in part on who did not have a special extracurricular group with which they were connected. The students then worked with Wayne State students in addressing one of the problems of the school: a few students destroying the bathrooms. During a university semester, eleven Meadowview students and eleven Wayne State students worked together to try to solve the problem and sought to beautify the bathrooms through painting murals.

In the course of this project, an incident occurred with one of the Meadowview students that serves to illustrate how the entire school rallied around a single student in need: after school, Janine, the janitor stormed into the classroom. She had just passed Natasha's mother in the hall, and had been asked to hold her baby, Natasha's sister. Janine then was horrified to see Natasha's mother proceeded to "beat the crap out of Natasha with a belt." Janine was in shock, and she had the baby in her arms. Natasha was screaming and being hit hard and repeatedly. In trying to reconstruct what must have provoked this incident, we learned that Natasha's mother had a note in her hand that presumably said something about Natasha's negative behavior that day. We informed the principal of this incident, as well as the classroom teacher.

The entire Meadowview community rallied around Natasha and her family. A parent-teacher-principal meeting revealed that Natasha's family was going through a divorce. The mother would have new insurance in a month with a new job she had to assume, and promised to take Natasha in for counseling. Tom promised to arrange some appointments ahead of time for Natasha, so that when the insurance became activated, they would be ready to go. The mother was also considering going on the annual Meadowview overnight parenting retreat. Natasha's teacher began a "circle of friends" for her. This meant that in a class meeting, the teacher discussed the fact that Natasha was having some serious problems, and that the teacher alone could not help

her. She asked for volunteers to help Natasha when anyone noticed she was having a hard time. Eleven students raised their hands to be in Natasha's circle.

Natasha was not the only student who expressed problems in the course of the service project. Several others exhibited behavior unlike their school behavior. To Tom, this was evidence that inclusion works. "I saw some behaviors of kids that I would not expect to behave that way...Part of the inclusion model says that these kids will perform better when they have positive peer pressure, and in some regard we had children, who because of the small group and because of the attention and because the peer pressure was *not* to perform, who just fell apart. And they were kids who in another building could be resource kids, yet here when included in classrooms, are holding themselves together."

Behavioral Challenges.

Generally, teachers are able to find ways to help children with diverse learning styles, who seem to want to learn, more so than they are able to find ways to help children whose behavior gets in the way of learning. Indeed, one of the biggest challenges for teachers is a child with behavior problems. Often, excluding children with behavior problems seems to be the best way to insure learning for the majority. When Tom was principal, he believed very strongly in keeping all the students at Meadowview. He thought referring a child to an emotionally impaired program would not necessarily help the child, and in fact would sentence the child to being considered "emotionally impaired" for the rest of his or her life. Further, since all teachers had students who posed behavioral challenges, it would be too easy to continue to send problem students elsewhere.

Based on the Glasser philosophy, students with behavioral problems would not be punished. Instead, it is believed that determining the motivation of the child -- determining what that child wanted -- will lead to an awareness of alternative, more appropriate ways to accomplish the desired ends. Then the student completes a one-page "success plan" that asks the student to write out what happened, the motivation for the behavior and the goals, or what will be done differently in the future. At times, the success plans are sent home for signatures to keep parents informed. This way of dealing with behavioral issues actually empowers the students by helping them determine the more appropriate way to act in the future.

The second principal, Nancy, believed a little differently. Like Tom, she was very interested in the thought of keeping all children at Meadowview. In the beginning, it seemed she believed her will to make a good school would equip her with the ability to solve behavioral problems as well. But this did not always happen. A case in point was Jacob, a first grader with a ring around his mouth from licking chapped lips, who knew all the expletives. Nancy seemed to want to balance the desire to keep him in the school with responding to her teachers' frustration levels. She decided to refer him to a program for emotionally impaired children. The teachers had not been used to this happening. For some, it was a positive signal that Nancy would listen to their

concerns. Others felt less comfortable with bringing problem behavior to Nancy for fear that a child would be sent away.

Community Partnerships

Meadowview has a number of partnerships in place with community groups. First, they have a partnership with a major local hospital, Growing Healthy, in which 30 physicians work personally with 55 third through fifth graders. Consistent with "including all," all interested students may participate. The doctors come to the school twice monthly and work with the same one or two students in order to build a personal relationship with a physician.

Another partnership is with Common Ground, in which emotionally steadiest students are trained as peer mediators. Meadowview also partners with Arcadia Presbyterian Church, who provides tutoring. In addition, there is a Seniors Tutoring program in which seniors come to the school to assist with homework. In the Senior Center partnership, seniors with Alzheimer's visit the students. In this way, in keeping with the values of inclusion and diversity, students continue to meet people with a variety of needs and strengths.

Changing Leadership And Community Dynamics

During the time we studied Meadowview, the dynamic principal of eight years, Tom, retired. Tom, who believed that the "five principles of whole schooling reflected the philosophy and many of the initiatives currently in place at the school" (interview, March, 1999), was replaced by Nancy, previously principal of a K-2 school. Nancy's own children had attended Meadowview; hence she was extremely motivated to assume responsibilities for a school that had such personal meaning to her. Although Nancy verbally embraced the ideals of Whole Schooling, she also wanted to bring her own vision to the school. Nancy clearly struggled with managing the multitude of challenges she faced in a school with students enrolled through fifth grade, although unlike Tom, Nancy did not always view the inclusive philosophy as a structure to solving the challenges she faced. Nancy was a more quiet person than Tom, and she was put in the difficult position of following in the footsteps of a much-loved principal.

Tom was affectionate and energetic. Walking with him through the school during an early orientation, he stopped to "eat" play food with the kindergarteners in their playhouse. One of the students called out, "I love you, Mr. Jones," to which he replied, "I love you, too." He spoke casually yet firmly with teachers, most of whom seemed to like him and respect his leadership. We never did see Tom alone in his office. He was always accompanied by one or more students whom she was counseling or reprimanding, in between making and receiving phone calls, working on his computer, or typing the newsletter. Tom was known for personally transporting children in his own car if they missed the bus. When he resigned, his superintendent remarked he knew of no one else would could go into the trailer park, pick up the

children, have words with the parents who neglected to get their children to school, and go back after school to have a beer with the parents. One of Tom's last projects was production of a film on Meadowview Elementary School outlining its philosophy and the five principals of Whole Schooling. Originally, Tom sought to be part of the Whole Schooling study because he believed "it is important for public education to link with outside supports to be able to do what schools should do" (interview, March, 1999).

In many ways, Meadowview Elementary is on the edge of the continuing changing demographics of many near-urban suburbs. For the last twenty years, the population has been changing from a largely white population. Many Jewish people live in the area, which boasts many synagogues and temples across all segments of Jewish religion. Increasingly, African-Americans have moved into Arcadia, many leaving the city to do so. Along with a growing Chaldean population, there are many other ethnic groups represented in smaller numbers. Arcadia has for many years utilized its increasing diversity as a way to promote the city. Indeed, Arcadia is one of the most diversity cities in Michigan in terms of racial and ethnic diversity as well as people from different socio-economic groups.

But all this has not been with out conflict and concern. Particularly as the city continues to attract a larger population of low-income black and white residents, life challenges associated with poverty become more evident in the schools. Both high schools have, in recent years, strengthened security measures and employed a visible in-school security force. It is reported of a meeting of administrators that some suggested that the children of these newer residents all be put in one school for children with problems.

The number of low-income children has increased concurrently with increased pressure from the state to perform well on the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP). As scores on this test correlate highly with the wealth of students' families, test scores have been a great problem. The recently retired superintendent put enormous pressure on administrators to raise test scores, threatening at least one principal with losing her job. Recently, the district adopted a basal reading program for the entire district. Emphasis is growing to keep children 'at grade level', resulting in pressures to teach only at one level and increased intolerance of children with emotional challenges. In 2000, the city's mayor threatened to take over the operation of the public schools, ousting the elected school board as occurred recently in Detroit. When Nancy took over leadership at the school, she brought a new philosophy and leadership style at the same time that she entered a situation where new pressures from above her in the district had the potential to exert enormous influence on structures and practices within the school. It is in this context that we spent almost two years observing classroom practice in this school, talking with teachers and other staff.

Lessons Learned And Questions To Ask

Meadowview represents both possibility and peril, both for inclusive schooling and for effective schooling for

all students. From one perspective, Meadowview represents the stability of important cultural components of a school. While we expected that special education pull-out classes might be re-established in the building in response to outside pressures and the change in leadership, this has not occurred. The structure of in-class support for students with special needs has remained stable. The same can be said of the growing constructivist instructional approach that has bit by bit become more established in the building. Most teachers use some variation of a workshop model of instruction, using trade books at varying levels, despite the purchase of the Houghton Mifflin basal series by the district. At both upper and lower elementary levels, some strong teachers are involving students in authentic learning activities not driven by textbooks.

On the other hand, administrative decrees in one fell swoop virtually destroyed looping and multi-age classes. Further, the commitment to keeping students with social and emotional difficulties in the building has substantially weakened with several successful systematic efforts to remove these students to special classes in another school for students with emotional impairments. Similarly, the explicit use of the Glasser principles has weakened though many teachers still use this approach to guide their own work.

In all this, the most substantive questions are: As Arcadia becomes a majority Black district, will the district and the culture of schools model that seen in the nearby urban area: highly structured, punitive, segregated approaches to schooling? The trends are in that direction.

Hamilton Elementary School
Affluent metropolitan suburb

On our first visit, we drove to Hamilton Elementary School, winding through the roads shielded from connections to the recently constructed freeway in this high-income community. Sitting on the side of a hill was this beautiful, imposing school called Hamilton Elementary. We toured the school after a cordial meeting with the principal and a group of eight staff representing all aspects of the school. We were impressed by the gracious hospitality combined with open conversation and dialogue. The staff evinced respect for the principal and her interaction style made people feel comfortable so that conversation flowed. We observed co-teaching between general and special education teachers, visited a classroom where a student with a severe and multiple disability was included, watched students with autism in regular classes supported by para-professionals, and toured the building, peeking in the two self-contained special education classes located at the end of a wing. We were impressed by the teaching, yet were confused why these segregated special education classes existed in a building with staff so proud of their efforts towards inclusive education. "Those students will never be included," said a staff member as we walked around that day. Two years later, this same staff person would be working with special education staff to facilitate moving the special

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education students into general education classes and the involving special education staff in providing support.

As we debriefed with the principal and psychologist at the end of the day, we said, "The two special education classes don't seem to fit with your philosophy of inclusion." The principal, Jeremy, looked at us, paused a minute, and said in a thoughtful voice, "You're right. It doesn't." While they discussed the district-level logistical reasons why these classes existed, pulling children with severe learning disabilities from throughout the district, we were struck by the non-defensiveness and thoughtfulness of the response. When we called Jeremy to let him know we wanted to spend time in his school, he was delighted. :"We need people bringing us outside perspectives, helping us to ask new questions," he said, a response and way of thinking we would come to know well over the next two years.

School and community.

Hamilton represents a school constantly engaged in growth and change that has seen inclusive education as part of its overall mission. As a near-suburb school, they are experiencing shifts in population that will provide an ongoing experiment in developing an effective inclusive school and engaging in partnerships with other schools. In the 2000 – 2001 school year, Hamilton was named as both a state and national Blue Ribbon school in recognition of their quality work.

Hamilton Elementary School is ten years old, one of the newest schools in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, home to many professionals and individuals in higher socio-economic brackets. In the past, Hamilton served a predominantly white, Christian, relatively affluent community of students whose families resided in the United States for generations. Very recently, however, the school has seen an influx of students from the Middle East, particularly Iraq, an increase in African-American students moving from nearby Detroit or closer-in suburbs, an increase in students whose parents are recent immigrants or transferees from all parts of Asia, and a significant number of children adopted from various locations throughout the world. Thus, Hamilton staff are being challenged to teach an increasingly diverse population, thus placing the commitment to inclusion of students with disabilities in a broader context.

We came to realize over time that Hamilton is considered by many in its district to be a flagship among their elementary schools. One of the newest schools in a system where many schools were built in the 1970's, Hamilton has a physical plant envied by many, and a reputation for attracting some of the most able teachers. The faculty elects a 'Teacher-Leader', who serves in a supportive role in many school projects and serves as a liaison between the principal and teaching staff.

Hamilton is part of a relatively large district that has a total K-12 enrollment of 12, 063 students. The school building is in a residential area, and it opened only nine years before this project began. There are four classes per grade level. The building is spacious and well designed. The district's

mission statement is: "...together with our community, [we] will provide quality learning experiences empowering each student to become a thoughtful, contributing citizen in a changing world."

The district's 2007 Mission Beliefs are stated as: learning is a lifelong process, individual responsibility is fundamental to learning, there is strength in diversity, positive relationships enhance effectiveness, effective communication is key to growth and understanding, working cooperatively enhances individual and group performances, all individuals have unique gifts and talents, change provides opportunities for growth, a commitment to quality requires a system to continually improve, and learning empowers and all individuals can learn.

Hamilton's mission statement is as follows: "We believe that all students can learn and that learning is enhanced by a combined effort of school, family and community. Students learn best in an environment that integrates curriculum, is developmentally appropriate, and addresses diverse intelligences, learning styles and interests. Students will develop respect for self and others and become cooperative, contributing citizens of a technological society."

Valley View Public Schools serves students in several bedroom communities and a small downtown area. All of the communities are considered high middle to high-income areas. One, for example, in 1989 had a median household income of $51,986. Driving through these areas, we see spacious houses in well-groomed yards. Many families have professional and managerial white-collar positions and a substantial portion of the population has graduated from an institution of higher learning. Hamilton is in the most affluent portion of the school district, but even there, there are pockets of poverty communities: 3.8% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch.

The road towards an inclusive school.

Since its beginning, the leadership and staff of Hamilton have sought to create an inclusive school. When we began visiting the school in 1999, they were including students with autism, medically related disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional impairment, and others. With the growing number of children whose home language is not English, bilingual services were provided. Paraprofessionals had been identified to work with some challenging students, particularly students with autism, and the two special education teachers in the building were co-teaching with staff as part of their job assignments.

Jeremy, principal of the school until the 2001-2002 school year, provided substantive leadership moving towards inclusion. As part of this, he chaired the district's *Elementary Study*, a ten year strategic improvement plan that incorporated numerous innovations: inclusion, multi-age, looping, bi-lingual services, differentiated instruction, social and emotional supports for children. All schools in the district are expected to develop a yearly

initiative based on one of these themes and move toward implementation of all aspects of the plan over a ten-year period. Growing out of this study, the district formed an "Inclusion Forum," an across-schools discussion group that focuses on the move toward inclusive education.

In 1998, the school applied to be part of the Whole Schooling Research Project to obtain the assistance of an outside group to help clarify its vision of a genuinely inclusive school by asking "different questions" that might help the school staff see a broader range of possible strategies and solutions. Researchers were invited to be part of the school change process and have been involved in individual interactions with teachers, support staff, the principal, and various discussion groups. In many ways, we have been able to experiment with facilitating change as part of our involvement at Hamilton.

When we began observations, students with moderate to severe disabilities were largely still served in the district's separate special education school. That remains true as of the spring of 2002. In addition, students were clustered in classroom placements based on special needs -- disability, language learning needs, gifted and talented – and even racial differences were not evenly distributed across classrooms.

During the three years we spent in the school, beginning in the spring of 1999, staff had numerous meetings to explore whether and how they might become a fully inclusive school. A school psychologist identified students with severe disabilities who were attending segregated schools whose "home school" would have been Hamilton. Meetings were held to discuss 'multi-level teaching' as a strategy for having students work in heterogeneous groups at their own levels of ability.

School staff particularly discussed the clustering of students by special needs. It became clear that the prime driver for such an arrangement was from support staff – special education teachers, speech therapist, and others – to facilitate their scheduling by having fewer classes with students needing their services. Placement decisions for students with special needs were largely made by the support staff team, who made an effort to gain approval from receiving teachers. The clustering issue was the focus of much discussion, and toward the end of 2000, staff voted to abandon clustering in favor of intentional and systematic heterogeneous grouping of students. The general education teachers on a grade level team would meet, inviting support staff to participate, and recommend placements for the coming year, heterogeneously grouping children and thinking about the match of student and teacher styles and personalities. This decision embodied a major shift. During the next year, the principal constantly reiterated the commitment to heterogeneous classes as an operating principle.

In the 2000 – 2001 school year, first steps were made related to the three separate special education classes in the building. These classes had also been a subject of much discussion. Previously, all of these classrooms were adjacent to one another in one wing of the building. As a first step, the upper elementary special education class was placed in the upper elementary

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section on the second floor and plans were developed to have students involved in general education classes. In some cases, students began to spend the majority of their time in general education classes. Thus, these rooms began to function more like resource rooms than fully self-contained special education classes. Some students, however, continued to spend the major portion of their time in these rooms. Sue, a psychologist who works in the building part-time, was assigned to work with teachers and paraprofessionals to facilitate this process.

Over the project period, we observed numerous strategies to engage teachers and other staff in dialogue, inquiry, and thinking about becoming a fully inclusive school. In the 1998 – 1999 school year, an 'Inclusion Committee' had explored many issues and developed recommendations, which included considerations of student-led conferences, looping, and multi-age classes. During the years in which we observed in the school, the principal facilitated discussions and forums and provided resources to explore options. Some of the change support strategies included:

- Inclusion Committee study group.
- Applying to and becoming part of the Whole Schooling Research Project to "bring new questions and ideas" to the school.
- Holding of forums on the interactive issues of multi-level teaching, a vision for a fully inclusive school, barriers and needs to become a more fully inclusive school.
- Participation of the principal and a small number of staff in both conferences held by the Whole Schooling Consortium in the summer of 1999 and 2000.
- Forums to discuss successes, needs, and next steps related to mainstreaming of students from the self-contained special education rooms.
- Visitations to other schools moving towards inclusion, several of whom were part of the Whole Schooling Research Project.
- Initiating the formation of the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling, inviting initially some 12 schools to a meeting at Hamilton Elementary.
- Involvement of teachers in a Multi-level Teaching Work Group to explore and work on multi-level, heterogeneously grouped teaching strategies.

Throughout this process, the role of the principal, Jeremy, was critical. He constantly asked probing questions and facilitated scheduling time for discussion, both during and after school. While he indicated his hope to move towards inclusion by constantly bringing questions to the group, reflecting what he was hearing, he did not mandate movement, instead working to facilitate group input and decision-making. This balance of leadership, facilitation, and listening is difficult. However, it was clear that the approach empowered teachers to express their opinion and explore options.

In this school, the researchers assigned to the building observed classes and adult discussions, but were also active participants, working to listen, ask questions, and challenge existing assumptions and practices. In many cases, we led discussions or made presentations to

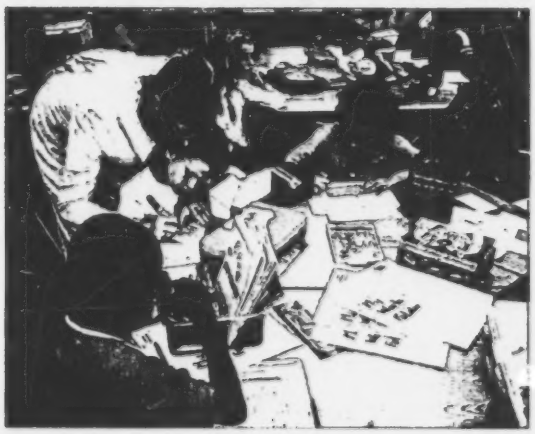
staff. The principal constantly queried us regarding perspectives that we shared. Frequently, we saw our language directly used in staff conversations and discussions. Jeremy constantly emphasized that "we value people from the outside bringing us new questions. If we keep asking the same questions, we will constantly get the same answers."

In April of 2001, the full staff voted to adopt the principles of Whole Schooling as one guide for their school improvement process. We further agreed to both pilot and collaboratively develop this process with Hamilton Elementary School staff in interaction with other schools involved in the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling.

In the fall of 2001, Jeremy became the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for the district and Karen, previously principal at an early childhood center in the district, became principal. She brought a continued commitment to inclusive education and a collaborative leadership style. As of April 2002, Hamilton remains one of the most inclusive schools in its district, continuing patterns established over the years. Other schools in the district, however, have joined together in the inclusive effort and Jeremy's promotion to district-level leadership has meant that change in this direction is taking place at an accelerated pace. The separate special education classrooms that pull students from across the district still are in place. However, students associated with those classrooms are involved in general education classes more. The teachers from the self-contained classrooms are spending increasing time in the classrooms of their general education partners. As of this writing, a significant shift has been to make each student's "home base" a general education classroom rather than the special education classroom. A small number of students with more severe disabilities are beginning to come to the school; however, no systematic attempt has yet been made to invite Hamilton cachement area students attending separate schools to return to their home school.

Including all.

All students with disabilities who are identified as special education students at Hamilton are included in general education classes for at least a significant portion of the school day with support from special education staff, related services personnel, and/or paraprofessionals. The



labeling rate for children is much lower in this school than in many other schools in the district: approximately 5%. Students included in general education have learning disabilities, autism, emotional impairment, and one student with severe and multiple disabilities. Presently, the district sends students with moderate to severe disabilities to special education classes that serve as centers for the district. Thus, some Hamilton cachement area students attend other schools and Hamilton itself draws students with moderate disabilities from throughout the district into its formerly separate special education classes. With an increasing number of exceptions, however, students with moderate to severe disabilities continue to be served at separate schools and in classes in other buildings throughout the district.

There is relatively little racial diversity in this largely white building, although there is a wide diversity of ethnic groups and native languages. Students in many classrooms receive bilingual services. There are a small number of children of color in the school. However, this demographic profile is rapidly changing. Students who are considered gifted and talented are served in regular classrooms with some pull-out services by a full-time "gifted specialist." Multiple intelligences are used as a framework for student assessment for all students to identify particular areas of strength. The two separate special education classrooms are referred to as "Learning Disabilities" classrooms and they serve students with severe learning disabilities and students with milder cognitive impairments (EMI). As we discussed above, during the time we observed in the school, major efforts were made to begin mainstreaming these students in general education along with some involvement of the special education teacher. This shift is still in progress as of this writing.

Teachers ability group students in several ways for instruction. In the early grades, an early intervention literacy team comes into K-3 classes two or three times per week. Four to five adults split the class into small groups of students who are engaged in a prescriptive program of literacy instruction involving phonics, common readings in simple books, and other related strategies. During this time, the special education co-teacher works with the identified special education students. Except for this literacy program, students with different categories of special needs – gifted, special education, bilingual – who were initially clustered in classes to facilitate support services by specialists are now heterogeneously grouped.

Authentic, Multi-level Teaching

The staff has received training in multiple intelligences, instructional differentiation, bilingual education, cooperative learning, co-teaching, and alternative assessment strategies. Observing in classes, we see many teachers who are using multiple approaches to designing and implementing engaging lessons. As you walk down the hall, you see writing and drawings of students' personal lives and research they have conducted. Students are often working in small groups or pairs in the hall. Teachers use cooperative learning, inquiry-based projects, activity-based learning, and authentic reading and writing strategies. Many teachers employ alternative assessment tools such as portfolios, and some teachers have begun to implement student-led parent conferences. The school offers a unique program of optional special interest classes at the end of the school day that helps provide a range of opportunities for students. In addition, the school has a full program of art and music.

In many classes throughout the building, students participate in the development of classroom rules and learn to be part of a team through the use of cooperative groupings. Many teachers use multiple strategies to involve students in decision-making and in having an active role in the conduct of the class. The student council gives students an opportunity to practice

leadership skills. Several monthly community service projects also provide the chance to develop citizenship skills.

In recent years, some teachers have begun to loop with their students. In the 2001-2002 school year, a grade 1-2 multi-age class was established for the first time. In general, teachers at Hamilton are moving steadily toward adopting many of the strategies and approaches described later in this report.

Support for learning.

The school has a wealth of resources to provide support for student learning. Support staff includes the following:

- Two special education teachers who co-teach with several teachers to whom they are assigned.
- Bilingual education specialist and several paraprofessionals
- Gifted education specialist who provides consultation with teachers and conducts some pull-out learning activities with students
- A school psychologist who also serves as a parent/community facilitator and liaison, helping to develop programs to promote drug and violence prevention that include support groups, drug and violence prevention information programs, and other activities.
- An Early Intervention Team, funded through Reading Recovery, that works in the lower elementary grades to provide intensive services to support literacy skill development of students
- Paraprofessionals assigned to individual students with challenging needs, such as a student with severe multiple disabilities or autism.

Hamilton particularly relies on a formalized process of collaborative consultation in which students are identified as having challenges. A teacher and member of the support staff meet and develop a written, targeted intervention plan for the student.

Special education support staff meet weekly as a Building Team, as they call it. During this time they may have formal collaborative consultations regarding students with teachers, plan and coordinate work, engage in dialogue regarding key issues. A major emphasis is on having the special education teachers and the speech therapist engage in collaborative co-teaching. Depending upon the classes and staff involved, this plays out in different ways. Increasingly, a primary approach has involved using support staff to collaboratively plan and teach lessons that would help students with special needs, but that involve the total class. In some cases, co-teachers may lead the lesson or the general and special education teachers may switch roles between leading and helping individual students. In some cases, the special education teacher has viewed the role as working with specific students on a caseload.

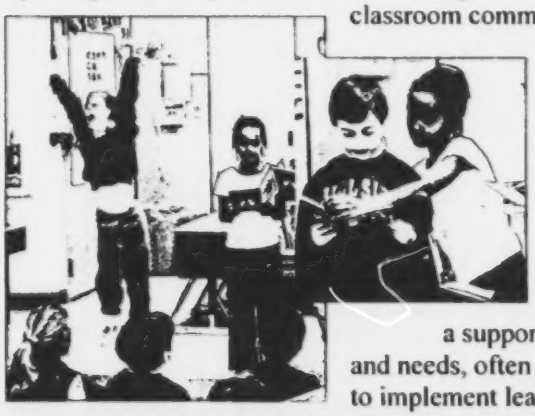
An ongoing topic of discussion at Hamilton has been how best to structure the use of the support staff. Discussions have been focused on moving beyond having staff deliver targeted direct services only to students on their caseload to a model of both direct and indirect services in the context of collaborative teaching with the general education teachers. Members of the support staff have felt double messages regarding their legal obligations under the state's rules and regulations for special education. While the various members of the total support staff engage in group discussions, each of their programs has tended to operate in independently, with

limited co-planning. For example, it is rare to find collaborative planning between the special education and gifted specialists, or planning among the whole team "attached" to all students within a particular classroom.

One of the topics of discussion in some forums involved the interaction between multi-level teaching and support. In numerous discussions, general educators expressed the need for more support. Given the relatively high levels of support in this school in comparison with most other schools, the meaning behind these statements has not been entirely clear. We suspect that there continues to be a belief among some general education teachers that the specialists have a "bag of tricks" that they need access to but cannot recreate or discover themselves. At the same time, belief that support staff are always required in order to bring about change can provide a rationale for not making changes that would bring the teachers' practices better into line with the philosophy those teachers have ostensibly adopted.

Building community and dealing with behavioral challenges.

Hamilton has sought in many ways to emphasize community in its school. Its Peace PAWS program emphasizes key points for students in building respect and positive relationships. The principal, Jeremy, has engaged staff in ongoing discussions regarding common issues for the school. Many of the teachers we observed emphasize the building of community in their classrooms. Shelley, a first grade teacher, engages children daily in making choices regarding their daily activities, considering their own behavior, and explicitly discussing their classroom community. Dennis, an upper elementary grade teacher, very intentionally engaged children in discussions that focus on building an inclusive classroom community when a student with a severe multiple disabilities spent two years in his class. Jennifer has students involved in developing rules for the class, organizing service projects, and using committees to accomplish important work of the class.



Ruby, a school psychologist functioning as a support person for dealing with social-emotional issues and needs, often works in collaboration with classroom teachers to implement learning units related to building community and enhancing social-emotional learning. For example, Ruby and Shelley worked together to help Ned, a first grader with autism, understand social interactions through the use of social stories. Similarly, Ruby and Julie, then a second grade teacher, taught some lessons related to dealing with feelings of anger and hurt in response to needs within Julie's class. Ruby and other support staff tend to work hard to use a variation on positive behavioral support when children are having emotional and behavioral problems, looking at the needs expressed by problematic behaviors and identifying more positive ways by which those needs might be expressed and then met.

Parent and Community Partnerships.

Parents are involved in Hamilton in many ways. On any given day, many parents and family members can be seen in classes throughout the building helping in ways that range from making

copies for the teacher to operating learning centers in collaboration with the teachers. At other times, parents come for formal programs, either school-wide assemblies or classroom-based presentations. For example, one day we visited Jennifer's fifth grade class when students put on a musical related to a topic they had been studying. Bella, now a grade 1-2 multi-age teacher, had special event she called the Peppermint Patty Café. Students set up tables with bright tablecloths and had developed menus that were literacy activities that each student presented to the 'customers', largely parents and other family members, at their table.

Parents are also involved in school improvement decisions through the district-wide School Improvement Steering Committee as well as each school's School Improvement Goal Committee. The school has a very active PTA and the building houses a Parent Volunteer Lounge. The PTA supports and encourages extra field trips, enrichment assemblies, family fun nights, and the Science Fair. Parents volunteer in classrooms, the media center and on district curriculum committees.

Democracy, leadership, and professional development.

As we described above, the school administration attempts to support teachers in engaging in change and improvement by involving them in team decision-making. This style seems to be a characteristic of the new principal, Karen, as well. Teachers may take initiatives and obtain support and input of the principal. We were particularly impressed with the way researchers on this project were invited to be active participants in a change process. In our experience, principals are often wary of outsiders in schools. As a result of this invitation and the many concrete ways in which this was made real, we spent much more time in this school than some others in the study.

We were particularly intrigued with the process of reflection and innovation supported in this school. In many ways, this seemed to spawn deeper thinking and commitment. On the other hand, the process was so slow we sometimes were concerned that dialogue was a form of resistance and an impediment to positive change.

Lessons learned and questions to ask.

Involvement at Hamilton Elementary has been a source of substantial insight and has raised substantial questions. We watched thoughtful leadership, discussion among staff, and interactions of general and special education teachers, all of which demonstrate the interest and support for inclusion of many of Hamilton's general education teachers, as well as their desire to master ever more engaging approaches to instruction and effective community building.

The commitment and leadership of the principal in the movement towards inclusion was critical. Where does such commitment originate? Although Jeremy was open enough with his thinking that we could record the commitment as it grew, we do not have a clear understanding of its roots and the reasons that it took hold so strongly.

In any case, by the end of the project there was both a commitment to be an inclusive school and many reservations about taking the next step. Some teachers thought that students served elsewhere should be invited back. One special education teacher thought that full inclusion was actually illegal because it did not conform to his understanding of the continuum of services mandate of IDEA. Some support staff were clearly uncomfortable with the idea of full inclusion, in part because they did not have a vision of their own roles in an inclusive school. This discomfort shifted and lessened as individual teachers began to experiment with new alternatives.

On one day after the close of the formal project, we talked with the staff and the new administration, expressing our sense that the school is at the edge. The question of whether or not it will go the next step is becoming pressing. For example, the separate special education rooms remain problematic. Has part-time mainstreaming in grade level teams become a new structure or is it a transitional phase on the way to fully inclusive teaching? Will school staff take the affirmative steps to invite students with moderate to severe disabilities back to the school? What does the new position of the previous principal, Jeremy, mean for movement towards inclusive education and addressing issues that are district-wide? Will the district continue to support disability-specific self-contained programs at various schools in the district, and how will that decision shape what happens at Hamilton?

In addition, Hamilton is directly in the path of major racial and socio-economic demographic changes occurring throughout the metropolitan area. Bordering Meadowview's district, whose population has just tipped to be slightly more than majority African-American, Hamilton's district demographics are rapidly changing. If experiences in other cities undergoing this change are indicative, the district will have even more challenges to a commitment to inclusion as the demographic and socioeconomic changes intensify. What will be the response? On the one hand, one feels teachers and staff are committed to inclusive teaching. On the other hand, it is not clear how directly staff are thinking about the impact and significance of these changes. We complete this project intrigued by the commitment and leadership towards inclusive education, yet wondering whether the school continue on the road to inclusion and how it will deal with demographic changes in already in progress.

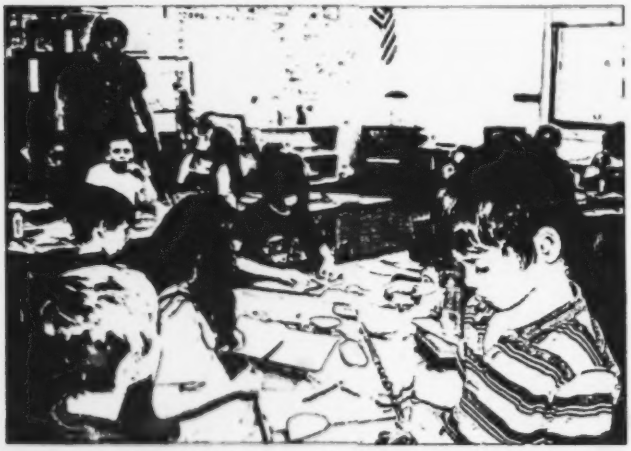
Evergreen Elementary School

Rural south-central Michigan

The Community.

This school is located in a small, rural community on the outskirts of a mid-sized city. At the community's center is a stop sign for a crossroads around which are clustered the major businesses and community institutions: churches, city hall, and so forth. The community is growing rapidly, however, as part of the overall growth of the metropolitan area of its nearby urban center.

The metropolitan area is undergoing a period of economic renewal and expansion after difficult times in the 1980's. As a result, the demographics of Evergreen's school district are changing and the community is less homogeneous than in the past. Formerly, the district's families relied primarily on small industrial shops, service trades, and agriculture for their livings. These sources of income continue to be important, but the area is also attracting higher income families who work in the newer technical industries located at the edges of the city and who have higher education levels and possibly higher expectations for their children. At the same time, the district is also absorbing children who live with foster families but whose own families live in Detroit or elsewhere. The district remains predominantly white, and these foster children represent a significant portion of the minority population of the school. At present, the school has a mix of socioeconomic groups with largely working class parents. There are only a small handful of children of color in the building.



The School

Evergreen Elementary School has 800 students and is part of a small district that also includes one middle school, one high school, and an adult education center. The K-12 schools are located on a single campus 1/4 of a mile from the town's central crossroads. The administration of the school district has had a change in leadership over the last few years. They have been seeking to establish a new sense of accountability in the school system and greater responsiveness to the community. At the end of the 2000-2001 school year, the current superintendent announced plans to leave and the future leadership of the district is again in question.

> *In partnership with our community, the mission of Nantucket Community School, as a leader in education, is to strive for excellence by providing students with quality, equitable and diverse learning experiences, preparing them to become responsible and productive members of a competitive society.*
>
> (The district's mission statement)

> *We, the Elementary Staff of Evergreen School, believe that all students can learn. We are committed to providing our students with a positive learning environment designed to foster academic and social growth, individual achievement will be measured through formal and informal assessment. We accept the responsibility to educate our students to become productive learners and contributing members of our school community.*
>
> (The school's mission statement)

School Change and Improvement

Many efforts are underway to improve the district's schools through innovation. These efforts are included in the school's NCA[1] accreditation process. The school has not adopted a formal school reform model; however, they are actively trying to use data to align their curriculum and ongoing assessments with the MEAP, the state's standardized testing program. At the same time, the school team at Evergreen has committed itself to developing an inclusive educational program and in recent years has made significant changes in that direction, particularly in the upper elementary grades.

Administrative leadership at Evergreen Elementary is provided by a team of two co-principals. Alice is also the district's special education director and Penny has a special interest in multiyear and multiage teaching models. The team has a strong and coherent vision for the school, both with respect to building inclusive community and with respect to achieving high academic standards. Teachers in the school have a significant sense of empowerment and see themselves as working with the principals as part of a team. There is considerably diversity in teaching styles and classroom cultures from one classroom to another. The central components of building an inclusive community are multiage classrooms, multiyear classrooms, co-teaching, paraprofessional support staff, and strong community involvement.

According to one of the teachers, the staff was given a choice whether they wanted to invest funds in technology for the classrooms or in paraprofessional support. The staff opted for paraprofessional support, resulting in having a general education paraprofessional aide available to every classroom in the school. There is still considerable access to technology, with some computers in most classrooms, access to televisions and VCRs, and a computer lab in the school's media center. However, there is less of a presence of technology in the classrooms than in some other schools in the study. (It is not clear, however, that there is less use of technology by students and teachers, merely that there is less hardware distributed throughout the building.)

In the 2000-2001 school year, the teachers agreed to use the methods and philosophy in The First Days of School[2] to try to establish a quiet and purposeful school climate from the beginning of the year. Teachers who mentioned this were very satisfied with the results. The teachers' focus seemed to be on behavior of students in hallways and when making transitions from one activity or location to another. The somewhat anti-inclusive assumptions that permeate the book and the method were not mentioned and may not have been noticed or deemed relevant by the Evergreen staff.

Early elementary: K-2

The school building itself is shaped like a large "h." The early elementary grades (K-2) are located on one side of the building represented by the short vertical side of the "h." Most classes in this wing are multiage classes across two or three grades (K-2 or 1-2). The option of a single-grade kindergarten is maintained to meet the needs of students deemed not ready for an academic environment. Following school-wide policy, a paraprofessional is assigned to each class. Most classes adjoin one another in a continuous teaching space where staff and children mix. The

[1] North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the primary accreditation group used by public schools in Michigan as well as other educational institutions in 19 states

[2] Wong, Harry K. and Wong, Rosemary T. (1998). The First Days of School. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications.

classroom areas are delineated by half-walls. In each classroom, there is a large classroom space, a partitioned area that can be used as a teacher work area and for one-on-one or small group work with children. There are also tables placed in the main hallway just outside the classrooms that can be used by individual students or pairs of students.

Within the classroom areas, the layouts vary but all avoid the traditional rows of desks set-ups. At least one classroom has a small loft space reached by a ladder, and all have seating arrangements that allow for large and small group activities, both at tables or desks and on the floor. Teachers have rocking chairs as well as more traditional desks and desk chairs. Classrooms are bright and decorated with both student work and commercially produced materials. There are cabinets brimming with supplies along the wall that forms a corridor between all the classrooms.

Upper elementary: 3-5

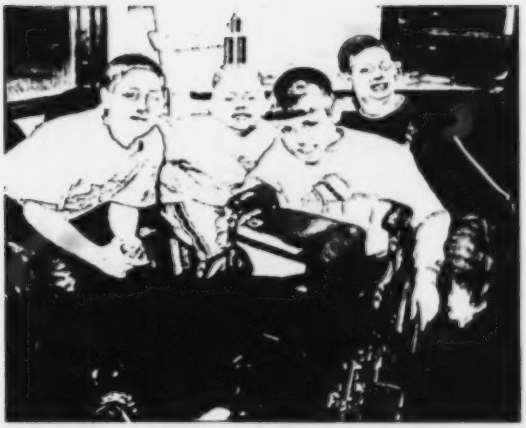
In the upper elementary grades, classes are organized by traditional grades (3, 4, and 5). At each grade level, one or two classrooms are designated as co-taught rooms where a special education teacher works with the general education teacher. Co-teachers are normally involved with each general education room for a half day, so that some classrooms are co-taught in the mornings and others in the afternoon.

Co-teachers sometimes collaborate in teaching the lesson and sometimes the special educators work more with students having special needs as the general education teacher does the main lesson. In addition, some of the grade 4 and 5 classrooms are looping classrooms, where the group stays intact with the same teacher for both years. This is labeled "multiyear" classrooms by the school.

Empowering Citizens in a Democracy

The school's two co-principals work together to share decision-making. Teachers have weekly common planning times that allow grade level teams and co-teachers to plan together. Students are dismissed one hour early every Wednesday to provide this planning time school-wide and insure that teachers can meet in whatever groupings are necessary for the tasks at hand. There is also use of substitute teachers to free classroom teachers to meet for longer work sessions during the school day when necessary.

There is a supportive atmosphere in the building. Many teachers are engaged in teaching practices that appear to seek to empower children to take active roles in their own learning. Teachers have latitude in selecting teaching philosophies to some degree though some initiatives are clearly encouraged and pushed by the co-principals. Children are taught the rules of the school, most recently via the Harry Wong approach. These are presented and discussed by the two co-principals together at the first of the school year in grade level meetings with children and staff in the gym.



Include All

This school has a range of students with mild to severe disabilities that include autism (AI), severe multiple impairments (SXI), and students with moderate to severe cognitive impairments. About eight students in the district attend a "center program" run by the county, but this is a situation the school seeks to avoid. The disability label considered least stigmatizing is used when possible. For example, several students are officially categorized as speech and language impaired but would also qualify for special education services under the labels of autistically or educably mentally impaired. Approximately 5% of the student body, compared with national average of 10% or more, is classified as eligible for special education services.

In K-2, students with disabilities are included in the general education classrooms with support from paraprofessionals and a special education co-teacher. Some one-on-one or small group work for specific targeted skills is done in tables in a workroom or in the hall. This program has been in place for about 8 years. For classrooms with students with more significant disabilities, schedules are arranged so that the students are supported by either a paraprofessional or a co-teacher throughout the classroom day.

In grades 3-5, students with disabilities are again included in general education with special education teachers assigned to co-teach in one to two classrooms per grade level. To maximize the ability of co-teachers to work with all students with disabilities, there appears to be some clustering of students with disabilities in the co-taught classrooms. However, the number of students with disabilities is not allowed to exceed five in a class of 24 students, and the range of disabilities among those five is quite large. This approach was begun because the school was concerned about performance of students with more significant disabilities. It is important to note that students with the most severe disabilities, who are supported by dedicated paraprofessional aides, are not necessarily placed in the co-taught classrooms if it is believed that the general education teacher and the special education paraprofessional together can support the student. These children often have a parallel curriculum to the rest of the class.

Continuing concern regarding the large number of high needs students in grade 3-5 has led to consideration of using pull-out special education room like a traditional resource room. At present, the students are sometimes clustered within their general education classrooms to receive literacy instruction using a model of direct instruction that is a successor of the DISTAR program but sometimes do leave the classroom in pairs or small groups to use materials and technology located in the special education teachers' room. All of the special education teachers have desks and storage space in this room to facilitate communication among them. One side of the room is set up to accommodate small groups of students.

During the last two years of the study, at least three students with moderate/severe disabilities who had been supported by dedicated paraprofessionals have been withdrawn from the school at the request of their parents. In at least two of the cases, the reasons given by the parents for their dissatisfaction was the lack of genuine social inclusion for their children. According to the principal, the parents felt that their children had no true friends and were not part of the social fabric of their classrooms. These three students were the three with the most challenging needs in the upper elementary grades, so their absence has changed the degree to which inclusion spans the entire range of disability at Evergreen, at least in the upper grades.

Authentic Teaching for Diverse Learners.

Instructional techniques and strategies seem to run a gamut of constructivist, child-centered approaches to more traditional approaches using whole-class instruction, worksheets, and round robin reading. Some classes have individual desks arranged in rows. Most, however, have students seated in groups of five or so. K-2 teachers are clearly involved in authentic, active learning strategies. They offer special interest classes for students in the evening as part of a recent new program. Games and projects are used to reinforce academic skills as well as to promote social skills and group processes. Although the teaching styles are more uniform in the lower grades, some of the strongest instances of authentic teaching were observed in the upper grades. These were observed in classrooms both with and without co-teachers; however, there was more conscious attention paid to meeting the needs of diverse learners in classrooms with strong co-teaching teams.

The co-principals are pushing teachers to align their curricula with the MEAP and to develop ongoing assessments that allow teachers to gauge progress towards objectives of the curriculum that the MEAP purports to measure. They believe that this process is serving to increase accountability of teachers for learning of all students. In addition, they strive to focus on aligning curriculum and using good teaching strategies as a strategy for heightening test scores rather than focusing on the taking of the test itself. The school has shown significant increases in test scores in recent years. Teachers work in teams and utilize a variety of ongoing assessments and running records to track progress of students. The teacher who labels herself as "constructivist" and who has the most obviously nontraditional classroom says that her classroom also has the highest MEAP scores at that grade level in the school. Whether or not this is due to self-selection of students into her classroom, it is used by both teacher and administration as evidence that high quality authentic teaching is the best route to high test scores, rather than teaching methods that most closely replicate a testing situation.

Special education co-teachers and general education teachers work together to facilitate student supports and curriculum adaptations as needed. Sound amplification devices are used throughout the building to enhance the voice of the teacher over classroom noise. There has been some difficulty in adapting this technology for use in the open space of the K-2 wing of the

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school, but the administration believes that the problems are minor and can easily be overcome. The school has collected data that is believed to show that these devices have raised achievement and test scores. The school makes a distinction between 'adaptations' and 'modifications' for special education students. 'Adaptations' allow students to pursue the general curriculum with supports and relatively minor curriculum adaptations. 'Modifications' involve more significant changes often resulting in parallel curricula for students with disabilities.

Building Community and Supporting Learning

The school has a welcoming atmosphere. There is a community bulletin board just inside the front doors and a few comfortable chairs for people who are waiting or early for an appointment or pick-up. Parents come and go with comfort and are welcomed in the office, which is adjacent to the entryway. The teachers and co-principals appear to interact in genuine, caring ways with children and parents.

The support structures put in place include multiage teaching, looping, paraprofessionals, and special education co-teachers. These staff members assist in developing the sense of care and support that pervades the school. Wednesdays are set aside for intensive planning among staff. Common Planning Time is created by early student dismissal on Wednesdays. In the morning, substitutes are provided so that special education co-teachers can meet. One time per month, co-teachers from all three buildings meet together.

In lower elementary, paraprofessionals and parent volunteers provide multiple supports for individualized assistance to students. There are often three or more adults in a classroom. In upper elementary, two special education teachers work with selected 'inclusion' classrooms, co-teaching a half day in each of their assigned classrooms. There are also additional programs to provide support for students: a service learning program in which high school students do work in the classrooms with teachers and students; and HOST, a mentoring program in which community volunteers read one-on-one with students.

Efforts at community building take many forms. In one example, there is a fairly traditional program to encourage independent reading in which students receive rewards when they have accumulated enough reading points. The rewards are somewhat unusual however, and are focused on community membership. Students reported on the system with pride and enjoyment: rewards include coming back to school in the evening to watch movies (with popcorn provided), having a chance to roller blade through the hallways, and so forth. The reward activities all assumed that school was a good place to be and involved students having social relationships with each other and with staff and community members. In one of the fifth grades, the teacher and students decided to participate in the high school's homecoming parade by making a float and joining the parade. The entire class, less two students who had a scout meeting, met after school at one of the student's homes to build the float, along with the teacher and the co-teacher.

Parent Partnerships.

The school is very family friendly and conducts traditional family outreach efforts such as parent teacher meetings. However, the co-principals and other staff have consistently indicated a desire to improve the degree and type of parent connection and involvement in the school. One recent innovation has been the introduction of "family Friday." Originating in a single classroom, this activity is slowly spreading throughout the school. Every Friday, parents are invited to join their children for lunch in the classroom. In some cases, students prepare food to serve; in others, it is a brown bag (or cafeteria food) affair. According to the community bulletin board, there is also a prayer group that meets weekly (off campus) to pray for the school.

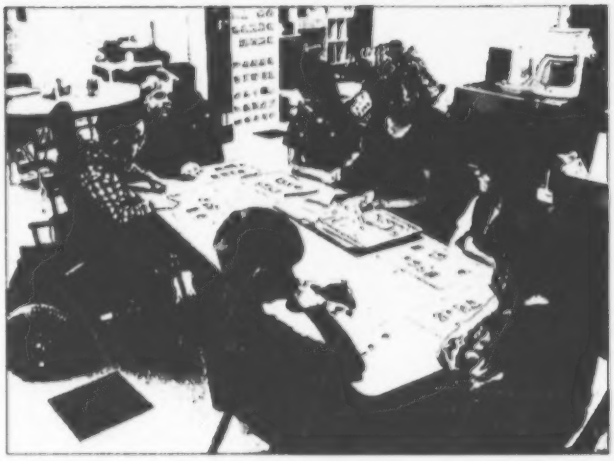
A strategic planning committee meets monthly to address parent involvement and other issues, and faculty involvement in the community is mandated. The school district as a whole has developed written communications for parents and a recent study found high degrees of parent satisfaction in interactions with staff of the school and its programs. The building is used frequently by community groups.

Armstrong Primary School
Rural northern Michigan

Driving up to this new, brightly colored school somehow makes you feel good. Parents of all sorts, high and low income, are coming and going. The principal, Bobbie, stands in the broad common area with a smile on her face, greeting families and parents as they come in, listening, comfortable, full of warmth. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff walk back and forth preparing for the day. Allen, a student with severe autism, meets the paraprofessional assigned to him and Rodney, an academically able student who has cerebral palsy, shows Bobbie his new lightweight wheelchair.

What is unique about Armstrong is the degree to which all staff genuinely have adopted inclusion as a value. They may struggle with individual students, but the commitment they share is clear. One day we sat in the small conference room of the school talking with Bobbie about Wesley, a kindergartner with an unstable home life whose behaviors were sometimes frightening. I had been surprised talking with teachers and other staff throughout the school in the consensus among all that this child needed to be included in their school. All were deeply concerned for the child, talking sensitively, wanting to reach out to him to bring the little boy out of what seemed a scared and angry animal. Bobbie talked about the possibility that social services might take the child away from the family. If this happened, he would go to another county since they could not find foster parents in this community. As we talked she began to cry, "I know what will happen to Wesley then," she said. "He will be put in a segregated program for EI kids that the ISD runs. We will lose him. This is my biggest fear. " We were struck by the contrast between this and the scenario we have seen at many other schools where the entire staff seemed united in anger toward such a child. How had this come to be?

School and community.



Located in northern half of Michigan's lower peninsula, the district that covers 525 square miles and has 2,100 students K-12, 65% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch. Some 14% of all students are labeled as special education students. Bobbie describes her school district as "land rich but resource poor."

Armstrong is located in a small community that is very rural, with much poverty and the highest infant mortality rate in the state, possibly due to many very young mothers and chemical pollutants in the area. Many parents have disabilities themselves. The district contains large parcels of state and federal land. The racial make-up of the community is fairly homogeneous with a vast majority of whites, and less than 10 representatives each of other groups: 4 blacks, 7 Native Americans, and 10 Asian-Americans. The population includes approximately 600 households with a median household income in 1989 of $22, 054. The economy relies heavily on tourist pursuits of hunting, fishing, and canoeing.

Armstrong Primary was built in 1997 after seven attempts to pass the school bond issue that allowed its construction. This new school, however, was the expression of a dream of the staff: a school that would welcome all children to learn together, a school that would be designed inside and out to meet the developmental needs of young children, K – 3rd grade. As one walks in the front door one enters an open space where the four hallways of the school converge. Ahead is a beautiful media center with glass doors and walls with books, a computer lab, a reading area where teachers bring their classes for read-alouds and other activities with the Media Specialist. Each hallway is color coded with floors of bright red, blue, and yellow. Yellow hall is for kindergarten, preschool, and a library with sets of leveled books; blue and red halls have mixes of first and second graders. The two grade 2-3 multi-age classes are at the end of the blue hall. These two rooms adjoin one another and the two teachers team-teach the classes together.

The office is directly on to the right of the entrance, with glass windows into the hallway. Directly ahead down the red corridor on the right is the entrance to the specialists' office. In this large room are housed the all of the members of the building support staff: special education teacher, speech therapist, itinerant occupational therapist, math support teacher, Title I funded literacy specialist, and the counselor. All work together, daily eating lunch together in the small adjoining conference room. This arrangement, resisted at first by the staff, has made daily interactions, relationship building, discussions of children a natural, integral part of the school life and has contributed to the sense of community in the building.

Each classroom is large, with either tables or desks, depending on the teacher's choice. Each room also has, in the corner, a loft arrangement where children can climb a short ladder or go up stairs to a second level. With netting and other interesting materials, it provides a place children

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can go for greater privacy. Additionally, the school has obtained funding to develop an extensive library of leveled books to be used in guided reading. This library is located in a large classroom. Teachers can check out well-organized groups of books such as Wright books for use in small groups in their classrooms.

The road towards an inclusive school.

Armstrong Primary made a commitment to be an inclusive school for all children from its beginning of the construction of the new building. However, this commitment and plan entailed a huge shift from the way the previous school had operated. Bobbie and members of the staff have reflected on how they became the school they are today. Bobbie had never considered being a principal but was called one day by the local superintendent after the existing principal resigned. She found many serious problems in the school:

> It truly was a dark time for my building. We were terribly overcrowded, with 650 students jammed into a building built for probably 500 . . . Because I came to this principal thing in such a roundabout way, I had no clue about the "right" way to do things. I didn't know much but I DID know that things didn't feel right. For example, there was total pull-out for special education students, resulting in a lot of isolation. The most severely impaired students attended center programs at the ISD [Intermediate School District] 18 miles away or in other districts. The regular classroom teachers didn't seem responsible for the special needs kids – in fact, no one *owned* any of the *challenges* our building presented. It seemed like all I was doing was dealing with *discipline*. Every infraction, big or small, got sent to me to 'FIX'. Like a fireman, I felt all I did was put out fires! I very quickly got the idea that the total climate of our building was *sick*. This really hit home when a group of teachers filed a grievance to exclude the paraprofessionals from the staff lounge. Technically the contract did say the teachers were entitled to a *teachers' lounge* but come on! Wow! How could the staff even begin to think about including kids when they felt isolated and divided themselves? There just had to be a solution! I just wanted to wave my magic wand and make change happen…but change is a slow process.

From the beginning, Bobbie had a vision of an inclusive school. Over the two years we spent in her school, numerous times we asked her the source of the vision. She did not know, but a vision of a school that accepted and welcomed all children was a deep part of her being. Entering a school in which segregation was the norm, where staff were at odds, was difficult.

Bobbie decided to begin, feeling her way toward the vision she could only vaguely see. She looked for staff who might be interested and found a few who wanted to get to work and take responsibility to solve problems. They formed a small study group and together read William Glasser's The Quality School[3]. They used this as a basis to probe deeply into issues in the school. For Bobbie it was "shocking to reveal what people really believed about kids" and they began to understand that "we needed to get to the root of our beliefs, and what we saw there was simply fear." Bobbie explains,

> We began experimenting with different kinds of support. People in our small circle of Quality Schools backed each other up and planned together. We wanted to

[3] Glasser, William (1992) The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion. New York: Harper Collins.

do more inclusion but just really didn't know where to begin. So we just started to do it! After all, the journey begins with the first step! We started phasing out the categorical room and started convincing parents to keep their children in out building… We did this by starting with the parents whom we had formed relationships with since their children were preschoolers. They *trusted* us so we started there.

Bobbie formed a particular bond with two specialists who began to share her vision – Betty the special education teacher and Tracey the speech therapist. "Together," she says, "we forged a bond of commitment to our beliefs." As they began working to include all children, they had their first major test when a family with a child with autism and very challenging behaviors moved into the community. As they struggled with this child, and as another child one day came into her office and ripped it apart in rage, she contacted specialists outside the school who could help: a consultant on inclusion from a university and a psychologist friend known for his expertise in dealing with behavioral challenges. "I just kept thinking," she said, "that I hadn't asked the right person…surely someone should be able to help us with all of our concerns. If only FIA[4], CMH[5], the courts, the ISD[6]…"

She brought in her psychologist friend to talk with staff and he told them words that "rocked our world . . . He said to his friend, 'Bobbie, you have to understand that *nobody is coming*' ". These words sunk home and forced a shift in direction. They began to accept as a staff that they had to figure the situation out themselves.

The real start of the problem-solving process was a retreat held in a nice, relaxing atmosphere for several days for the entire staff before they moved into the new school. Creating a professional community among the staff itself provided both challenges and opportunities. Bobbie had the opportunity to select people she thought would support the philosophy of the direction she wanted to follow. She describes the retreat:

> Our retreat truly was the birth of our new staff. First, we spent time grieving the fact that no one was coming. Then we pulled ourselves together and began to plan for what came next. We accomplished seven things.
>
> 1. We revisited our beliefs (lots of deep, probing dialogue);
> 2. We abandoned our boundaries and limits;
> 3. We listed the support we did have;

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[4] Family Independence Agency, the state agency that replaced the former Department of Social Services

[5] Community Mental Health, the state agency that administers county-level programs for people with developmental disabilities, "severe emotional disturbance" or mental illness, and severe substance abuse

[6] Intermediate School District, and administrative entity roughly corresponding to a county and responsible for many supports to local school districts and major responsibilities in the area of special education

4. We listed our needs;
5. We developed a school improvement plan, a Title I plan, and a North Central Accreditation plant that was all *one* plan;
6. We created the crisis intervention team (to remove the confrontational and emotional aspects of behavior disruptions; we understood that behavior was communication);
7. We divided the specialists up and assigned one per teacher.

But mostly we came away from the weekend with the firm belief that *all our kids belong to all of us.*

The school staff have continued to build on these events – retreats each year, building-wide celebrations with children and parents – to continue their commitment to inclusion with no pull-out special education or Title I rooms and to work on literacy strategies. Within a fairly short time, the school made major changes that took hold in the belief systems of all staff in the building. They became part of the Whole Schooling Research Project in 1999, in part as a way to reach out and make connections with others sharing the same vision. In the initial site visits, we heard that they were not having opportunities to be challenged and learn. They have had no local colleagues similarly seeking to be an inclusive school.

Including all students.

Armstrong is committed to welcoming all students to it school. Some 14% have been identified as special education students with labels that include autism, learning disabilities, educable mental impairment, emotional impairment, physical or other health impairment, and speech and language impairment. In this rural community, students come from a wide range of incomes. However, 65% qualify for free and reduced lunch. Virtually all students in the school are white as virtually no people of color live in their community. The commitment of staff as a whole to be an inclusive school appears to be quite well established. We found no indication of underlying dissatisfaction with the goal of the school to include all children, even those with substantial challenges. The comments and working relationships among staff all appeared to reinforce this commitment.

Instruction.

Over time, every school develops a culture of instruction that develops through an interaction between building-wide, formal initiatives and the personal instructional styles and initiatives of teachers. At Armstrong, there is a heavy reliance on work in small groups of six to eight students, grouped by ability levels, each directed in learning activities by an adult. We observed such arrangements especially in literacy-related activities in numerous classes across grade

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levels. The school has been a pilot site for the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP), an intensive assessment tool for early literacy that provides a 'balanced' framework for literacy instruction. Much of the instruction that we observed is centered on a variation of guided reading in which students are grouped by ability and an adult leads the children through reading a common book together, using strategies and working on skills. In many of the classes, the bulk of instruction in literacy has been based on this model.

However, other approaches and strategies were also evident. In the preschool, Kristy, the teacher who began the multi-age classes in the school, provides a class in which children work in heterogeneous groups on authentic tasks for the appropriate to the developmental age of her students.

Two grade two-three multi-age classes are housed next to each other. These teachers were very new to multi-age instruction and were experimenting. They decided to team teach their classes, pulling aside the removable walls that separate them. They have divided their group into two sections. One section will work in one classroom that has enough desks to facilitate work on individual projects, or sometimes on projects done by pairs of students. In the other classroom, they establish centers with various activities: guided reading, working on writing or spelling, social studies, and so forth, in small, ability-based groups supervised by an adult, typically the classroom teacher (with the highest group), two paraprofessionals, and the special education teacher.

The school uses 'Chicago Everyday Math' program, a highly structured math program. The multi-age teachers have reported having difficulty teaching this curriculum while keeping their multi-age groupings intact, so they have broken students into age/ability levels in teaching math. In the second year of our observations at the school, a Math Support teacher began teaching math lessons based on this curriculum in a separate classroom for every class in the school. Several times per week, each class goes the math room for a 45-minute lesson. The classroom teacher participates as well. This is intended to both provide instruction by a teacher well trained in this curriculum but also to provide guidance and modeling for the general education teacher.

Another teacher operates a 2-3 multi-age class as well. She does not participate with the support staff in using small ability groups but does most of her instruction using centers established throughout the room where children learn how to work on their own. They keep records and periodically conference with the teacher regarding their progress. This class appears to have fewer students identified as having special needs.

In a second grade class, we discovered a very different approach to the typical ability-based, small instructional groups used in the school. This class was developed jointly by the general education teacher and the speech therapist to assist students with language development needs. In this class, instruction is organized around reading and writing workshop, in which children are engaged in authentic reading and writing activities at their own level of ability, largely in

heterogeneous groups. Here, students work collaboratively with the teacher and speech therapist, who go from group to group providing assistance and direction as needed.

Staff of the school are constantly seeking to expand resources. In the summer of 2001, the school was awarded a grant that would allow them to run a special summer program to provide additional engaging experiences and learning opportunities related to literacy learning.

While Armstrong is in many ways an outstanding example of the Whole Schooling principles in action, the reliance on ability grouping in most classrooms works against the Whole Schooling definition of inclusive education. It appears that the extraordinary commitment to creating an inclusive community and to emotional support of all children counteracts the potential negative effects of ability grouping at this school, but the true costs and benefits of this compromise remain to be investigated.

Supporting teachers and children in learning: *A Specialist support team.*

Armstrong has developed a particularly strong support system for inclusive education. In addition to the professionals listed earlier, special funding was approved through the district that, mixed with special education and Title I funds, has allowed the school to hire paraprofessionals for most classrooms in the school. In addition, a small number of paraprofessionals are assigned as one-on-one assistants for students who have substantial behavioral challenges. While we were in the school, such a paraprofessional worked with a student with severe autism and two children with emotional difficulties. Such paraprofessionals often helped to support a student to work in the general education classroom, often using a parallel curriculum. In cases with severe behavioral challenges, a paraprofessional might work with a student in a separate, small therapy room on various activities. This occurred primarily to provide a higher level of supervision; however, the goal was always providing the stability that would allow the student to re-enter the general education class.

All of the specialists provide support services in classroom, most often as part of ability-based literacy and other instruction. The special education teacher, Title I teacher, and speech therapist particularly work together to provide in-class supports, jointly supervising aides to the general education teachers. Each classroom is assigned at least one specialist for support. Through co-teaching, modeling is provided on how to work with a variety of special needs students.

The support staff has worked out an efficient working process providing support to general education classroom teachers with whom their working relationships appeared extremely comfortable and positive. Support staff and general education teachers have learned to work as a family team, all taking responsibility for all children in the school, constantly sharing information and ideas, particularly in informal discussions at lunchtime as specialists and teachers eat together in the office.

Once every month, each teacher in the school has a Wednesday afternoon planning session with the specialist team. During this time, the music and physical education teachers take the classes of two general education teachers for a special activity. Common planning periods are also built into the schedule for grade level teams, including a one-hour block of time per month, with each grade taking one week per month.

Community, crisis intervention, and paraprofessional support for behavioral challenges.

The school staff also has developed an effective crisis-intervention team. This team includes representatives across the entire school staff, including the physical education teacher, secretary, speech therapist, special education teacher, two general education teachers, and one special education paraprofessional. This team has received specialized training in dealing with crisis situations. If a teacher is experiencing a situation he or she cannot control, the teacher sends a student with a note to the office. A coded announcement is made and all on the team who can do so immediately go the classroom identified in the announcement to provide assistance and intervention.

Parent and community partnerships.

Staff strive to include parents in their children's educations as early as possible, bridging the gap from the preschool years to primary with multiple transition activities. There is a monthly family night, a strong and active Parent Group, and school-to-work lesson plans which link children back to their community. Bobbie has identified a lack of trust between parents and school as a problem to be addressed. There are also scheduled monthly parent meetings where learning and fun are mixed.

We also observed several strategies by which the school staff seeks to link school learning to the community. During one year, the school adopted "community" as a year long, school-wide theme for study. This involved children in gathering information about the local community, creating drawings and art work related to differing aspects of community, developing three dimensional models of the community, and organizing a self-written play which they put on in a large assembly of parents and community members.

Finally, school staff are active in accessing community agencies to provide support to families and children. Bobbie, along with the specialists, provides leadership in this arena. She is active in a human services coordinating committee for the county. In addition, we observed her continued and direct connections and interventions, reaching out to hard-to-reach professionals such as psychiatrists in search of answers and assistance for children and their families.

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Leadership, democracy, and professional development.

The ongoing leadership of Armstrong and the process of change we have described above point to a school that has successfully developed a culture committed to including all children in learning together. The principal, along with key staff, has provided leadership in establishing a clear vision for the school while both encouraging and supporting staff in taking responsibility to develop solutions for themselves. Bobbie has also been particularly committed to staff development and has worked with a professional development team through the Intermediate School District. She seeks out professional development opportunities and supports attendance of staff members at conferences and other training events.

Lessons learned and questions to ask.

Armstrong Primary is as inclusive a school as any we know in Michigan. They have successfully moved from a segregated school, one filled with staff conflict and hard feelings, to a culture of inclusion and community that pervades the school. In addition, we saw numbers of examples of teacher-to-teacher innovation, the freedom to try new strategies, and working relationships that allowed sharing among at least some teachers. Further, the support staff provided intentional support to teachers, seeing this as a major part of their role, particularly with teachers new to the building. They seek to support individual children, as well as the entire instructional effort. Support staff, particularly, daily helped strengthen a culture in which all adults understood that all the children in the school belonged to each one of them.

On the other hand, the school relies heavily on ability-based instruction. They appear to not have considered the potential harmful effects of such instructional arrangements on both the culture of the school and the self-concept, and even learning, of individual children. In addition, with the exception of a small number of classes where teachers appear to have established different instructional procedures and classroom culture, the use of small groups of 6-7 students per adult who emphasized very direct, directive instruction has created a situation in which adults have constant power and supervision over students. Said another way, students are rarely involved in child-to-child helping (for example, via peer mentorships or shared reading), and have minimal responsibility for the implementation of classroom procedures. It is the only school we have ever seen where it often seemed that there might be too many adults in the classroom. Finally, while the commitment to children with behavioral challenges was very clear, we were concerned with the fallback to one-to-one paraprofessionals. While this served both to control student behavior and to provide distraction from problematic activities, it is not clear what students are learning socially and emotionally in this process nor is it clear that the school community is exploring and experimenting with strategies to build community among the children and meet the emotional needs of these students without effectively segregating them.

Despite these concerns, we valued the time spent in this school, the work they has occurred in building an inclusive culture in the school, the exemplary examples and model of caring leadership we saw so clearly demonstrated.

Rogers High School
A semi-urban metropolitan high school

Smokestacks begin to dominate the view along Interstate as one travels south of Detroit to the industrial suburban area where Rogers High School is located" Amidst the smoke, one begins to notice the landscaping along the road, and then there is the sign giving credit to the landscapers: the Rogers High School horticulture classes. Beside the parking lot, a large electronic sign gives the time of day while high school events run continuously across the bottom of the screen.

School And Community

Built in 1923, at a cost of $1,140,000, Rogers High School was described as one of the most magnificent buildings of its time. The two-story brick building was built to provide for 1400 students, but by 1928, 1800 were "crowded in." No further construction was done until 1957 when the Music and Industrial Arts Annex was opened. In 1962, the Science block was built, and in 1970, the district citizens passed a $7,000,000 bond proposal to renovate the original building. A new gymnasium, swimming pool, locker rooms, "cafetorium," central kitchen, student commons area, administrative offices, art rooms, home economics area, stair towers, planetarium, and driver education rooms were built.

Special education co-teacher assists student in a biology class.

Trophy-filled showcases greet visitors in the main lobby. An assistant principal patrols the hall with his walkie-talkie. An Air Force Recruitment Officer is enlisting students. "Rogers is Drug -Free," a banner proclaims. The Trading Post is "Open."

Wearing t-shirts and blue jeans fashionably too long and too wide to stay up at the waist, the student population of Rogers High School is predominately Caucasian. Of the1,300 students, one hundred forty qualify for free and reduced lunch. The principal, Marlene, has three assistant principals, four counselors, and 87 teachers. A wide spectrum of students coexists in Rogers, from students labeled "severely multiply impaired" to students labeled "gifted." The staff state that all students are welcomed, regardless ability level. We are told that all students have opportunities to choose to be in any educational or extracurricular program. The staff tries to build an environment to empower students to become citizens in a democracy where all members of society are represented.

The bell sounds. Students pour out of classes, swarming around the vending machines. Some students push others in wheelchairs. Some wheelchair users travel without extra assistance. Many are in route to the Trading Post, the school store.

The Road To An Inclusive School

Of all the high schools in the metropolitan Detroit area, Rogers has perhaps the oldest and most extensive system for inclusive education in the form of team teaching, which has been in place since 1987. At Rogers, inclusion began with teachers talking to teachers. Prior to 1987, students labeled Educably Mentally Impaired (EMI) were taught by three teachers at one end of the building. The students considered learning disabled (LD) and emotionally impaired (EI) were enrolled in many separate classes. The special education teachers were feeling isolated from the rest of the school. They started asking those teachers (beginning with the gym teacher) who often had their students in their classes to consider team teaching with them. Gradually the teaming system expanded.

Today, an elaborate scheduling system allows team teaching in a number of the classes. Generally, the team-taught classes are comprised of approximately two-thirds general education and one-third special education students. The team consists of a regular classroom teacher and a special education teacher. The relationship between the teaming teachers seems to account for much of the success of the system. The special education staff appear to be close, sharing an office that allows for constant communication of information about students and support for one another.

Each teacher-team determines the specific ways in which they will teach the class. In some teams, the classroom teacher serves as the lead teacher and the special education teacher walks around assisting all the students as needed. In other teams, it was nearly impossible to tell which teacher was which, as there was a balance of interaction, lecturing, and other teaching practices. In some classes, the special education teacher looked at all assignments submitted by students on that caseload so that grades might be adjusted if necessary. Special education teachers were available for reading tests orally, adapting assignments, and planning lessons.

Not all students take part in the team-taught classes, but they are very popular. Those students determined to have the greatest need are scheduled in team-taught classes. In this manner, all students are equal; no one knows who is a special education student and who is a general education student. According to the district Principal of Special Education, "doing business this way is the norm, people accept it here."

Including All Students

In addition to the team-taught classes, Rogers houses a center TMI (trainably mentally impaired) program as well as an SXI (severely multiply impaired) program. Each of these programs is physically located at the base of "senior hallway" near the main entrance of the school. Initially there was discussion about where to locate these programs. Often, such programs are located in the back of the school, hidden away from public view. However, at Rogers, they are visible to emphasize the presence students in these programs have, and that they are very much a part of the school. The students in the SXI program are responsible, with their aides, for collecting the morning attendance reports from all the classrooms. Moreover, the students in this program can elect to attend regular classes such as orchestra, horticulture, vocational education, art, and physical education. Students in the SXI program attend pep rallies and eat in the cafeteria. A service-learning program pairs general education students with students in the SXI program during classroom times and at lunch. In this way, students in the

general education program earn credit for service learning for assisting their peers with severe disabilities.

Freshman, sophomore, Junior, and senior class meetings are held the first Monday of every semester, and are facilitated by the principal, in which she meets with class officers. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, the principal approaches class officers when there are school issues that need to be addressed. Officers then take the issues to their classes until they are resolved. One year, for example, there was a problem with littering. Instead of the principal instituting a rule against littering, she presented her view of the problem to the class officers. They in turn met with students in their classes, and amongst themselves came up with a solution and a plan.

One teacher, in particular, has been significant in drawing attention to the abilities of all students: Ben, the art teacher. General education students and special education students, including those from the center programs, all participated in his art classes. Most notably, under Ben's leadership, has been the creation of floor to ceiling murals in the office and along the corridors of the school. The murals were initiated by one student's interest. Charles was a special education student, for whom Ben felt it was important to follow a mural through to completion, and ultimately this enhanced his school experience. From that point on, many students wanted to make murals. Because making murals is ideal for collaborative work, students of all ability levels have participated.

Co-teaching in an economics class.

As has been said, all students, regardless of their ability are accepted at Rogers, and whenever possible, they are included in the general education classroom, the cafeteria, and all other locations. Curricular adaptations are made to accommodate diversity using multiple intelligences teaching strategies and team teaching. A mentoring program for freshmen is offered by National Honor Society students. At Rogers, the staff not only seeks to provide the optimal educational environment for all learners, but also to promote an atmosphere that embraces individual differences. Many students have clearly been influenced by this philosophy as is demonstrated in the acceptance of students with special needs.

Instruction

Curricular adaptations are made as needed. In the case of the team-taught Earth Science class, the special education teacher reads tests individually to students who request this. He also grades the tests, and the general education teacher defers to his judgment when grading students who have special education labels. The Earth Science teacher feels strongly about teaching one content in her classes, yet also makes an effort to use a variety of modalities to appeal to different learning styles. These include drawing, looking at student projects from previous years, reading or looking at two-dimensional examples in the text, or looking at and feeling three-dimensional models in class. Similarly, in Biology, tape recorders are available for use by those who cannot take notes well.

Dealing With Behavioral Challenges

Behavioral problems are minimal at Rogers, but there are several programs in place for dealing with them. One program consists of having a security guard stationed at the school as well as having assistant principals patrolling the hallways. Codes of conduct are printed inside the students Handbook and Academic planner, and include behavioral guidelines, attendance policies, and dress codes. Marlene, the principal, is "very proactive about any acting out" and regularly calls parents in for conferences.

One of the special education teachers, Andy, is assigned to work with approximately ten students who are considered "high risk" and need additional support. He receives an extra prep hour in which he meets with this group of students. The period is handled much like a support group and they discuss problems during this time.

In other classes, the majority of the problems consist of "acting up," failure to complete homework, and lack of attention span. The teachers respond to these problems by having students work together to complete many of their assignments, with students motivating each other in a friendly, competitive way. If problems get out of hand, the student is removed from the class and taken to the office. In gym, when behavior problems do occur, the teacher says they are dealt with primarily by excluding the student from a fun activity or in more extreme cases, detention and loss of a day's participation grade.

Students coming from the middle school who have been assigned special education labels are scheduled for resource room instruction for English during their freshman year. A gradual weaning off the resource room instruction is completed according to the pace of the student. By the time students are juniors, they often go to the resource room only once per week. The ninth graders also have in-services on the topic of high school behavior, including such issues as sexual harassment and drug abuse.

Democracy, Leadership, Professional Development

A strength of Rogers High School is its diverse community and the culture of acceptance of students with differing needs and abilities. A good deal of the structure of Rogers High School is centered on the student government and the student officers who represent their classes. At least once per grading period, half days are scheduled so that the classes can hold meetings. The class officers are required to have an agenda and the meetings are attended by the principal. In this way, student leaders are mentored.

Community programs help prepare students for jobs following graduation. One of the most active programs is the Horticulture program, which includes greenhouse, floral shop, and landscaping programs. Students maintain the section of the median strip on the road outside the school as part of the landscaping program. In the greenhouse and florist shop, students perform

real jobs for which the school florist shop has been hired. Every year, there is flower show in the community and students submit arrangements. In class, students are taught the entire range of jobs they might be required to perform once they have been hired in horticultural businesses after graduation. During one class, we observed students learning to write formal business letters related to their submissions to the flower show. In all these classes, the general education students and special education students (including some from the center programs) are in attendance together.

Taking school-to-work more broadly, in-service programs cover topics about the world of work. Special guest speakers from a wide range of businesses and agencies come to describe the types of responsibilities their jobs entail.

Partnering With The Community

At Rogers, the staff has worked in close conjunction with the community to help students prepare for jobs in the community in which they reside. There are a number of vocational programs and cooperative education programs. The horticulture program described above is one such program. A number of cooperative educational programs exist such as the one at a local hospital. Like the horticulture program, programs in auto mechanics and machine shop provide direction to many students who will enter the job force directly from high school.

Lessons Learned, Questions To Ask

It is evident that the special education faculty is a very close team at Rogers. They share an office together so that there is an ongoing opportunity to talk about issues as they arise, and also to offer consistent support to one another. The teachers at Rogers have been team teaching for longer than any other school in the area, and have been pleased with their efforts so far.

As the result of a meeting in which the faculty discussed team teaching, however, some of he instructors expressed needs to have more time to plan with their partners. Therefore, we wondered about how this school of dedicated teachers might be assisted in taking further steps to build upon their team teaching model, such as finding more time for teacher dialogue and planning, and also for more interactive or didactic methods of teaching and learning.

The center programs for students with severe disabilities housed at Rogers pose a challenge to the school community. Although there is a claim that these students are included in some non-academic activities, genuine participation appeared minimal. Activities within the SXI classroom, which serves young adult students through the age of 26, were not age appropriate and did not reflect current with respect to adults with severe disabilities. The teacher made it clear that she was concerned about these issues, but lacked both training and support to address them. If Rogers is to continue to evolve as an inclusive school, considerable attention will have to be paid to the education and experiences afforded to the students attending the center programs.

Table IV-2: Whole Schooling Research Project
Michigan Intensive Study Schools
Statistical Comparisons
1999-2000

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS						HIGH SCHOOLS	
	Avery	Armstrong	Evergreen	Hamilton	Meadowview	Westover	Drummond	Rogers
	Urban	Rural	Rural	Suburban	Suburban	Rural	Suburban	Suburban
POPULATION								
White	12.3 %	98.6%	98.0%	93.9%	67.8%	98.0%	98.3%	98.2%
Black	81.6%	0.3%	0.8%	1.8%	28.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.1%
Native American	.3 %	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	1.0%	0.3%	0.7%
Asian	1.0 %	0.6%	0.2%	1.2%	2.5%	0.2%	0.8%	0.4%
Latino	5.0 %	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	2.0 %	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%
Total	951,270	1542	6300	74652	75728	21265	22714	30928
Median Income	$37,028	$22,054	$34,172	$51,986	$40,579	$19,977	$ 49, 246	$49,400
Education								
Less HS	27.1 %	18%	25%	10%	15%	36%	18%	31%
HS	33 %	45%	38%	19%	22%	25%	31%	36%
College no degree	22.7 %	23%	21%	19%	21%	21%	30%	19%
Assoc Degree +	16.1 %	15%	17%	52%	42%	22%	24%	14%
SCHOOL								
Per Pupil expenditure	$4,706	$5,406	$3,103	$5,548	$5,553	$3,903	$4,859	$4,708
Free/reduced lunch	89 %	56%	19%	4%	53%	77%	2%	15%
Teacher/student ratio	12-1	22-1	25-1	22-1	25-1	15-1	30-1	26-1
% Special education students	9 %	14%	4.8%	5.0%	2.5%	13.8%	9 %	11%
Student enrollment	160	301	800	586	472	232	1424	1288
MEAP: Math	59 %	K-3 School	72%	93%	48%	100%	78%	60%
MEAP: Reading	88 %	Does not	64%	79%	48%	94%	44%	65%
MEAP: Science	55 %	Give the	27%	63%	8%	33%	58%	49%
MEAP: Writing	64 %	MEAP.	58%	84%	42%	53%	45%	43%

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Table IV-3: Whole Schooling Research Project: Michigan School Sites
Summary Analysis of Implementation
of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling Practices

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	Democracy	Include All	Authentic teaching for diversity	Build community and support learning	Partner with families & community
Armstrong Primary Rural K-3 Low income, white area	- Administrative leadership in promoting innovations and engaging staff in decision-making.	-Mild through severe disabilities – autism, POHI, mental impairment. -	-Two multi-age classrooms. -Much active learning. -Ability grouping in multi-age room for math	-1 special education teacher provides support throughout the building. -Paraprofessionals, *therapists, & community* volunteers in-class support.	- Outreach to community and families.
Evergreen Rural K-5 Rural area close to small city	-Two co-principals work in partnership. -Teacher discretion in selecting some teaching approaches. -Principals support staff in working to align curriculum with state standards. -Common planning time once per week with early school dismissal.	-Mild through moderate disabilities in general education —POHI, mental impairment. -5% identification rate. Kept low due to interventions and support in the building.	Multi-age teaching Cooperative learning Active learning strategies in some classes. Observed: - Play and music performances - Book projects - Project-based learning in science. - Move towards direct instruction for 3-5 students with disabilities & in-class ability grouping.	-Multi-age teaching in grades K-2. Students with disabilities included in these classes with minimal TC support. -Grades 3-6 co-teaching in selected classes trying to keep ratio of 5 students with disabilities in a class of 25. -Use of many paraprofessionals funded largely by Title I.	- Many parents in the building all the time. - A sense of community & acceptance in the building. - Interest in improving parent-school connections.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (continued)	Democracy	Include All	Authentic teaching for diversity	Build community and support learning	Partner with families & community
Hamilton Suburban K-5 High-income area with largely professional and managerial employment of families.	-Team building and engagement of team decision-making by principal and staff. – Grade level teams work together to make curricular decisions.	-Students with mild disabilities and autism. -One student with a very severe disability. -Students with multiple languages. - 10 year elementary school strategic plan adopted by the school board that incorporates many elements of whole schooling including commitment to inclusion - Students with more severe learning disabilities served in a separate special education class in the building that services the whole district. - Most students with moderate to severe disabilities in separate classes or schools.	Engaged, active learning. Examples: - Hands-on geography with Michigan maps - Reading time on carpet - Authentic learning with plants - Portfolios for student led conferences. -Cooperative learning. -Enrichment classes 2-3 time per week based on choices of the students. - Daily schedule wheel and student choices in 1st grade class. -Ability grouping in 4th grade math and early elementary literacy groups.	-Paraprofessional for student with severe disability. -Co-teaching in some classes. -Collaborative consultation by support staff. - Peer supports for student with severe disabilities. - Pair students with higher and lower abilities -In early elementary, teams of support staff come twice per week to each room to engage in intensive literacy instruction. - Exploring models for using support staff with other project schools.	-Community liaison staff position. -Parent volunteers in centers and other activities in the classrooms.
Meadowview Suburban K-5 Near suburb to Detroit. Wide range of socio-economic levels of parents	-Glasser Quality School training & approach. -Teachers have discretion in approach to teaching literacy and other subjects. -Collaborative survey and input from staff to deal with multiple issues. -Staff take different approaches to teaching.	- Strong vision & commitment to inclusion of principal. - < 5% identification rate due to supports provided in classes. - Students with LD, TMI, EI (many not labeled), hearing impaired. - Board level policy for inclusion (whose implementation is spotty).	- Many teachers use whole language approaches to literacy – reading and writing workshop. - Jason Project for science. - Pressure being put on this school due to MEAP scores.	- Looping or multi-age by most teachers either individual or team teaching. -Support staff team of 2 special education and 2 Title I funded teachers provide in-class assistance. -Block scheduling of specials to provide collaborative planning time. - In-class support in early elementary by speech therapist.	Multiple outreach activities to families: - Student led conferences by all teachers. - Science learning night with parents and kids. - 'MEAP' night for parents.

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HIGH SCHOOLS	Democracy	Include All	Authentic teaching for diversity	Build community and support learning	Partner with families & community
Drummond Suburban 9-12 Located in rapidly growing suburb north of Detroit. High-income area of working class people.	-Principal supports and facilitates team and faculty decision-making. - Administration supports teachers in taking stands that involve political conflict in the district.	- Students with mild disabilities supported with co-teachers in general education. -EMI students in separate c lass based on LCCE – functional skills and community-based training.	- Interdisciplinary teams at 9th and 10th grade levels. - Honors program part of general education: advanced work. - Varsity letters through many avenues, not just sports. - Thematic studies using engaged teaching techniques in many classes.	- Teacher-student interactions aimed at building community with students. - Special education co-teachers part of interdisciplinary teams.	- Booster club that raises money for different school programs.
Rogers Suburban 9-12 Near suburb south of Detroit. Largely white working class community.	- Principal providing leadership to engage staff and kids. - Principal meeting with 'classes' in the school for dialogue. - Engagement with staff for volunteer efforts for inclusion.	- Students with mild disabilities included in general education. - Students with moderate disabilities for county in building with some integration in general education classes. - Students with profound disabilities in special class integrated into some general education classes. - Commitment to inclusion most in Wayne County. -Cluster of students and resource rooms.	- Small group work on projects. - Lecture / direct teacher instruction on skills. - Vocational – technical training in many areas accessed by students with special needs. - Community projects.	- Sense of community in the building. -Co-teaching support by special education teachers in selected general education classes where students with mild disabilities are clustered. Teachers both 'teach' and 'help'. Good collaborative work. - Commitment to kids and teachers going the 'extra mile'.	- Stable families in area. Many parents went to school in this high school. Close relationships. - Strong ties to local community organizations and institutions.

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WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

V. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN AND THE DETROIT METRO AREA

The schools we studied operate within the context of educational practices in Michigan and, for the most part, in the Detroit Metropolitan area. In this section, we review the educational context as it relates specifically to inclusive education.

Inclusive Education in Michigan

Early on, Michigan developed a progressive tradition for caring for people with challenges in their lives, enacting some of the most generous social service legislation in the country. In this general environment, it was not a surprise that the state passed legislation in the 1970's to educate children with disabilities ages 3 – 26, setting a standard of comprehensive services that would, in part, eventually become part of federal legislation. During the 1970's, the state of Michigan took national and world leadership in the de-institutionalization of persons with developmental disabilities. Significant class action suits related to conditions in state institutions led to a state policy that was committed to community placements-- largely at the time into group homes, sheltered workshops, or other similar programs. Michiganders have long been proud of this heritage[1].

Michigan made major investments in school programs for students with disabilities. Intermediate school districts built new facilities to educate students with moderate to severe disabilities who previously would have been in residential institutions. Special education legislation was passed in the 1970's that substantially expanded funding and the scope of services provided in the state, with services starting at age 3 and continuing in some cases through age 26. Concerned that such programs be well implemented, "special education rules", essentially state regulations, were developed that specified numerous details of program implementation. Programs were organized around special education classrooms based on discrete disability categories.

In the mid-1980's, schools in a few states and Canadian provinces began to experiment with the next phase of services for students with disabilities, bringing supports offered in typical (non-segregated) environments to a new level. In Kitchener, Ontario, schools established successful

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[1] Henrickson, W. (1991). Detroit perspectives: Crossroads and turning points. Detroit, Wayne State University Press.

Gibson, R. & Peterson, M. (2001). Whole schooling: Implementing progressive school reform. In Wayne E. Ross (Ed.). The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities. New York: State University of New York Press.

efforts to include children with mild to severe disabilities in general education classrooms with support. A unique partnership of individuals worked together to develop, celebrate, understand, and share information. Marsha Forrest, as advocate, trainer, and university technical assistance provider, worked closely with George Flynn, Canadian equivalent of school superintendent, principals, teachers, and parents. Their work had substantial impact in Michigan, only a three-hour drive from Kitchener and four hours from Forrest's group in Toronto. Forrest and her colleagues offered annual summer institutes on integrated school and community. Substantial numbers of individuals from Michigan attended these seminars and obtained grounding in what later was to be called "inclusive education." Teams of people were organized to attend shorter training sessions at the Kitchener school system itself.

School teams from two counties in Michigan were particularly involved in these institutes beginning in 1988 and 1989: Washtenaw county near Ann Arbor in southeast Michigan and Marquette and Alger counties in the Upper Peninsula. These teams gained a base of support, knowledge, bonding, and excitement that laid the foundation for work in their own counties.

In 1988, a series of events occurred in Washtenaw County, Michigan, that stimulated leadership by educators and advocates in implementing inclusive education in that county. The director of the Washtenaw Association for Retarded Citizens had worked for years advocating for change and engaging in discussion with educators in school districts in the area. A new superintendent for the intermediate school district (ISD), Mike Emlaw, was hired who was open to "supported education," as it was then termed by some who saw a parallel to supported employment. He sanctioned a planning and pilot effort to move ahead in the county. Supported by a grant from the Michigan Department of Education, WARC sponsored several training events including a series of presentations by Marsha Forrest regarding the efforts in Kitchener, Ontario. She drew substantial crowds of people to afternoon and evening meetings in the fall of 1988.

Under the guidance of the associate superintendent for special education of the ISD in Washtenaw County, a planning committee was established composed of parent and professional representatives of schools throughout the county. Originally, the ISD hoped to pilot this effort in one school building in one district. However, it soon became clear that numerous parents were interested in seeing their children "come home" from Highpoint, the separate school for students with significant disabilities operated by the ISD. Consequently, several schools in several school districts in the county began experiments in implementing inclusive education simultaneously. These included Saline, Ann Arbor, and others. By the spring of 1989, several districts returned students with moderate to severe disabilities to their local schools with support from the ISD. As this occurred, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District set an important precedent and model for the state by developing arrangements whereby funds associated with students in separate schools followed students back to their home districts.

A deaf student assisted by an interpreter in a suburban High School.

This effort built very naturally on an innovation project funded by the Michigan

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Department of Education in the Saline Schools, a small rural district just north of Ann Arbor. The "Saline Progression" was part of a statewide series of projects designed to experiment with "alternatives to special education." In this program, the Saline Schools had returned some of their more severely disabled students back to the district from the separate school run by the county, placing them in a cross-categorical special education classroom. The stringency of the special education rules around categorical programs in Michigan made this project an important innovation. That is to say, the detailed special education rules laid out minute specifications for programs designed for students who fell into specific disability categories. Experimenting with the use of "cross-categorical" classrooms was a major departure from first determining a student's disability category and then matching him to a program designated for that category. In the Saline project, students were in a separate classroom in a general education building. However, the district made efforts to integrate students with disabilities with typical students. Through this project, Saline schools moved beyond categorical programs and began to move towards integration. The district's success in this endeavor spurred them to be one of the first in moving substantially into experiments in inclusive education.

Washtenaw ISD and cooperating school districts worked to develop a systemic effort. By 1990, their efforts were being evaluated and teachers, principals, the special education director, and the superintendent began to speak in training sessions, conferences, and seminars throughout Michigan. Saline and other school districts in Washtenaw County soon were providing local examples of inclusive education that were visited by other school districts.

An inclusive, multi-age class in the northern lower peninsula of Michigan

At the same time, parallel efforts were occurring in the Upper Peninsula, driven by somewhat different dynamics. Again led by the Intermediate School District, in this case Marquette-Alger ISD, educators in these two counties developed plans to integrate students with emotional impairments, moving many students from separate schools to their home school. The ISD sent a team of people to the summer institute in Canada in the summer of 1988 and the following year began to develop and implement plans to facilitate integration of students with emotional impairments. As these efforts began to be successful, teachers and administrators from schools also became articulate spokespersons regarding inclusive education.

By 1990, counties at two geographic extremes of the state were implementing effective models of inclusive education. The work in Marquette-Alger ISD was particularly important given the initial focus on students that some would consider the most difficult: students with emotional impairments. Their reasoned and successful approach in one of the most impoverished areas of the state set a model that influenced other districts.

As these two intermediate school districts were beginning to experiment with inclusive education, advocates, educators, and parents began express a desire to develop a statewide focus on inclusive education. In the fall of 1988, the newly appointed director of the Developmental Disabilities Institute at Wayne State University in Detroit and the director of the Washtenaw

ARC agreed to co-sponsor a group of individuals to come together to discuss school integration of students with disabilities. This group built on efforts of the Washtenaw county organization. During its first year, this group held monthly meetings of some 20 people who (1) organized themselves as the Inclusive Education Network; (2) identified strategies to facilitate change towards inclusive education and (2) articulated a position statement on inclusive education. The Inclusive Education Network provided a forum for discussion of issues, mutual support, strategy development, and advocacy. During 1990 – 1994, the network sponsored training programs and coordinated advocacy efforts related to inclusive education policy.

The following position statement on inclusive education was drafted by the group and finalized for signing in April of 1989.

We believe full inclusion means equity and quality education for all students.
We believe that inclusive education is a value and underlying philosophy by which we should educate all students.
We believe that all schools should include and value all students.
We believe that the purpose of education is preparation for adult life through teaching the skills needed to work, play, and live productively in the community.
We believe that preparation for life in the community best occurs when all students are educated together.
We believe that each student belongs in the classroom with same-age peers, attending the same school he/she would attend if not disabled.
We believe that each student deserves an individualized education which includes all the supports necessary for learning.
We believe that regular and special education teachers, administrators and support staff should work together as a steam, supporting each other to meet the unique needs of all students.
We believe that successful inclusion is dependent on the ongoing shared responsibility of parents, regular educators, special educators, support staff, and students.
We believe that school districts should provide the necessary supports and assistance to fully include all students with disabilities.

This statement provided a mechanism for a clear commitment to and understanding of inclusive education. By May of 1989, the position statement was officially signed by some 40 individuals representing 22 organizations.

Around January of 1989, efforts had begun to design a "systems change" project to submit to the Office of Special Education that would assist schools in expanding their efforts to move towards inclusive education. Funded as a Michigan Department of Education initiative by the federal government, the project committed the state to a project goal of "inclusive, community-referenced education in Michigan for all children and youth"[2]. In the fall of 1989, a conference on inclusive education was co-sponsored by the Michigan Department of Education and the Developmental Disabilities Institute. Marsha Forrest again came to Michigan to inspire and challenge approximately 300 people. At this meeting, Associate Superintendent Barbara Markle made a welcome keynote speech for the conference in which she committed the department to support the move towards inclusive education as an integral part of school improvement associated with the recently passed Public Act 25. As surprised attendees subsequently inquired

[2] Michigan Department of Education, 1989, p. B-2

about the specifics of this commitment, the Michigan Department of Education created a committee to develop a policy statement on inclusive education. This committee was the first of several policy groups that would deal with the issue of inclusive education in Michigan.

The inclusive education committee was chaired by Rich Baldwin, soon to be named as the next Michigan special education director, and included representatives of some 20 educational organizations in Michigan. The committee developed a draft of the position statement within one year. Michigan's policy statement on inclusive education was the first in the country. It defined inclusive education as . . .

> the provision of educational services for students with disabilities, in schools where non-handicapped peers attend, in age-appropriate general education classes under the direct supervision of general education teachers, with special education support and assistance as determined appropriate through the individualized education planning committee (IEPC). [3]

Teacher consultant provides assistance to students in an inclusive class in western Michigan.

Initially, inclusive education was perceived as a highly controversial approach implemented with only a very few children in two visible school districts in the state. By 1992, however, schools throughout Michigan were implementing inclusive education with growing numbers of students. A 1991, a survey by the Michigan Association of Directors of Special Education identified a wide range of districts who considered themselves to be increasing school integration efforts for students with disabilities. A report from the Michigan Inclusive Education Project similarly indicated that as of 1991 some 36 school districts were directly involved in the project and were providing inclusive education for 895 students. By 1993, this number had jumped to 67 school districts in 209 specific school buildings involving 3,722 students with disabilities[4].

Based on the charge in the policy statement on inclusive education put forth by the Michigan Board of Education, the staff of the Michigan Department of Education invited leaders involved with inclusive education in Michigan to develop a set of recommendations for implementation of inclusive education. The working group had articulated a range of recommendations each specifically connected with implementation provisions and needed changes in Michigan's special education laws and rules. Shortly after, this report and work of the committee become connected to another planning process: the revision of the special education rules.

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[3] Michigan Department of Education, February, 1992
[4] Michigan Department of Education, 1995

A two-year study ensued to revise special education rules in Michigan. However, this process was delayed for many years. Finally, in the spring of 2001, the Michigan Department of Education developed proposed rules changes that would bring Michigan rules and regulations into line with federal law. These changes would have reduced the inflexibility of present rules in Michigan to make use of special education personnel to support inclusive education easier. However, many aspects of these changes, including the abolition of such prescriptive rules which has provided a psychological and legal safety net for many parents, combined with pushing decision-making down to a county level, resulted in great outcries at public hearings. In a rare show of unanimity, parents, teachers, administrators, and advocates all opposed implementation of the new package of rules, albeit for a wide range of contradictory reasons. As a result, the new state superintendent, Tom Watkins, who took office in the fall of 2001, stopped these proceedings and only minor rule changes are being implemented at the present time.

In recent years, no study has been conducted to determine the movement of schools in the state towards inclusion. The Michigan Department of Education did fund a study of "co-teaching" between general and special education teachers out of which were developed guidelines for co-teaching. Based upon these, a training program operated for several years drawing teams from school districts throughout the state.

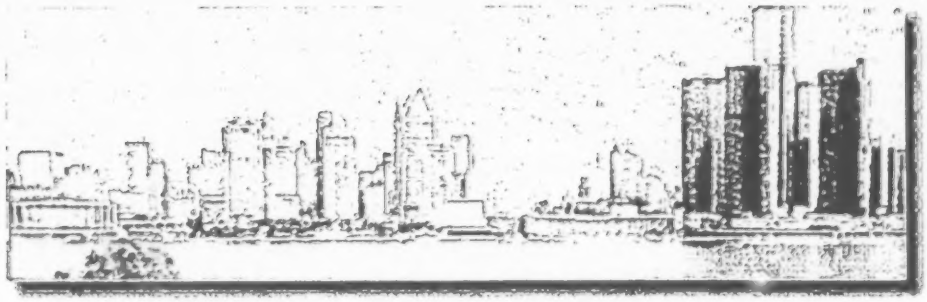
An ongoing study by researchers involved in the Whole Schooling Research Project has involved university students observing in schools and classrooms in the Detroit metropolitan area to determine practices related to inclusive education. During 1994 to 2002, over 400 observations have been conducted in approximately 300 schools in the Detroit metropolitan area. This data, the initial data collected from 35 schools in the Whole Schooling Research Project, and informal conversations with school leaders and advocates throughout the state allow us to draw several tentative conclusions.

Co-taught class in a Detroit suburb.

First, a major effort towards inclusion of students with more severe disabilities has stalled. Where we find such students in general education classes, it has often been due to substantial parent advocacy rather than school policies or preferences. Many educators we interviewed in schools said that they had "tried that" but it "did not work"; others simply were not aware that such students might go to their school if they had a special education label.

Second, the words "inclusive education" are often avoided because they are seen as controversial. Rather, for many the term "co-teaching" has been used to refer largely to the in-class supports provided for students with mild disabilities: mild learning disabilities cognitive impairments, and emotional disturbance.

Third, however, there has been a quiet trend among a small number of schools to move toward a more inclusive philosophy, reaching out to students with both mild and moderate disabilities, and on occasion more severe disabilities, connecting these efforts to overall school reform. Most of the schools we studied fall into this category.



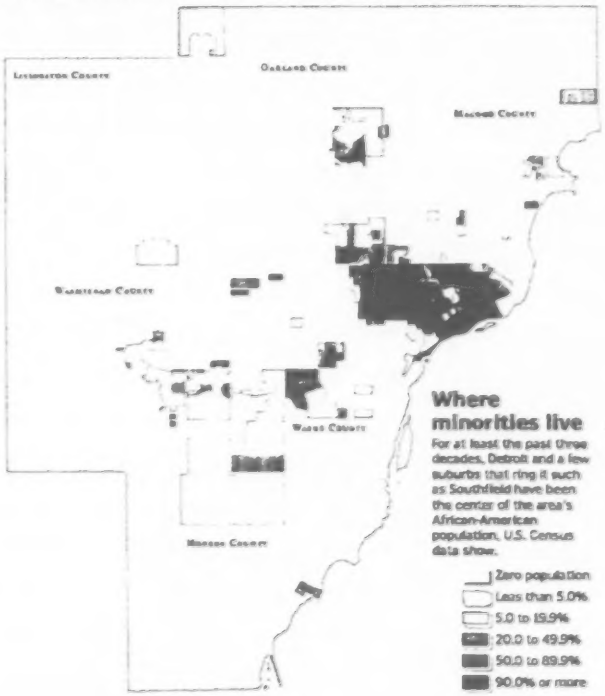
Inclusive education in the Detroit Metro Area

As in many states, Michigan's major city, Detroit, is a story unto itself with respect to inclusive education. Of the seven schools we studied, five were located in the Detroit metropolitan area. Here we discuss the status of inclusive education in Detroit proper and the metropolitan area as a whole. A colleague has said, "Where Detroit goes, so goes the country."[5]

> Detroit has often taken the lead in social movements. The depression of 1929 began when a bank at the corner of Griswold and Michigan in Detroit closed. Many of the first industrial unions were formed there. The collapse of industrial work in the US began in Detroit. There are many reasons to suggest it is an important bellwether location for the country.

Good times and the racial divide.

For many years, Detroit had a stellar international reputation. In the early 20th century, the city was known throughout the world for the quality of its schools, and a boom of school construction created many of the school buildings in which children continue to learn today. Despite the debates about cutting 'frills' such as art and music and the role of schools in 'Americanizing' foreign immigrants, most Detroit schools were filled with active learning, often building on the ideas of John Dewey and other progressive educators of the time[6]. Throughout the city, residential neighborhoods were graced with elm trees and individual homes, more than any major city in the country. Despite


Where minorities live
For at least the past three decades, Detroit and a few suburbs that ring it such as Southfield have been the center of the area's African-American population, U.S. Census data show.
Zero population
Less than 5.0%
5.0 to 19.9%
20.0 to 49.9%
50.0 to 89.9%
90.0% or more

[5] Gibson, Richard. Personal communication, 2001.

[6] Mirel, J. (1993). The rise and fall of an urban school system: Detroit, 1907 – 81. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

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racial tension and segregation, by the 1960's the city had a reputation of having the most positive race relations in the country.

Yet, underneath this veneer, a disparity of wealth and resources simmered. Bit by bit, race and wealth played a clearer role. While Henry Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, and other manufacturers made this city and the whole area known throughout the world as the center of the burgeoning auto industry, Detroit divided into ethnic enclaves, each fighting for its own share of resources, predicting what would later become the divide that now exists between city and suburb, largely black and largely white[7].

The city-suburb divide became established in the 1950's as the flight from the city began and fiscal resources for schools began to dwindle. Federal policy provided funds to create highways to bring people quickly in and out of the inner city. Creation of these new highways destroyed many viable neighborhoods. People of color were geographically concentrated in the city, their mobility to other locations hindered, with few loans for home improvement approved in redlined areas. In 1967, conflict tore the inner city apart in what has alternatively been called the 'riot', 'rebellion', or disturbance' (depending on the political view of the commentator). The movement out of the city exploded so that from the census in 1970 to 2000, Detroit lost almost 1/2 million people to the suburbs. As of this writing, the Detroit metropolitan area is one of the most ethnically diverse and most segregated metropolitan areas in the United States[8]. Driving on I-696, the newly constructed loop around the northern part of the city, takes one through small communities that are alternatively largely people of color or largely white[9].

The Heidelberg Project. A local Detroit artist creates a vision out of junk in a low-income area.

[7] Henrickson, W. (1991). Detroit perspectives: Crossroads and turning points. Detroit, Wayne State University Press.

[8] Trowbridge, Gordon. Fewer Metro Detroit neighborhoods are integrated than 20 years ago. The Detroit News, January 14, 2002.

[9] Chaffets, Z. (1990). Devil's night: And other true tales of Detroit. New York: Random House.

Gibson, R. & Peterson, M. (2001). Whole schooling: Implementing progressive school reform. In Wayne E. Ross (Ed.). The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities. New York: State University of New York Press.

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The Detroit Metro Area

The Metro area is composed of three counties, each unique, each linked to the others. Detroit is located in *Wayne County*. The Detroit River, long a carrier of major cargo freighters from Lake Michigan to Lake Erie and a major source of the early growth of city, runs alongside Detroit and then alongside southern Wayne County. The river has determined the location of major auto plants and other industries, many of which are located in the Downriver area, now home to working and lower middle class communities, largely white. *Oakland County*, northwest of Detroit, is home to the richest and wealthiest as well as the impoverished city of Pontiac. Pontiac is a miniature version of Detroit, also a victim of abandonment by white residents and major industries. *Macomb County*, toward the northeast, is home to "Reagan Democrats," many of whom are people of eastern European descent who moved from Detroit in the 1960's, fleeing from a Detroit they saw as increasingly and intolerably black and poor[10].

Detroit schools.

The decay of the schools began in the 1950's and has continued and worsened. By 2000, 85% of the student population of the Detroit Public Schools was black, with concentrations of other ethnic groups in particular locations throughout the city. Over the last 12 years, Detroit has had seven school superintendents, each coming with a major reform agenda, each failing[11], and has lost some 30,000 students in the last five years as the black middle class follows the path of their white predecessors, moving to the suburbs or placing their children in newly formed charter schools.

Reform has come in waves with each superintendent, and, more recently, with a political restructuring of the governance of the city's education system. Superintendent Deborah McGriff brought efforts to empower local schools following the Chicago model. She quickly angered teachers and the union who largely opposed these efforts. Dr. Eddie Green later promoted numerous progressive reforms in his short stay as superintendent, putting in place a major federal grant to improve math and science and obtaining funds from the Annenberg Foundation for a major school reform initiative. Starting in 1997, this five-year reform initiative required schools to work in clusters and apply for grants of up to $4 million to support school reform.

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[10] United States Census Bureau. (2000). http://www.census.gov

[11] Mirel, J. (1993). The rise and fall of an urban school system: Detroit, 1907 – 81. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

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Angry demonstrators speaking at Detroit board meeting protesting takeover of the school board.

Most of Detroit's 300 schools sought the funds that were eventually awarded to 10 clusters of some 35 schools in 1999[12]. As funds were awarded, Governor Engler ousted the elected school board and requested the Mayor of Detroit to appoint a "reform board," largely members of the elite who have had no connection to Detroit schools. The first year board meetings were filled to overflow with outraged citizens held in check by as many as 200 police, some meetings interrupted as police arrested protesting parents and students [13]. The board hired an acting CEO for one year, David Adamany, recently retired President of Wayne State University, and Detroit teachers walked off the job in a surprise wildcat strike[14], ignoring recommendations of the union leadership. In the summer of 2000, Dr. Kenneth Burnley was hired as CEO, coming from Colorado Springs, home to the PEAK Parent Center, a school system in which inclusive education has become well established

Detroit Metro Area and Inclusive Schooling.

Moves towards inclusive education in the Detroit metropolitan area are spotty, an enclave of work and movement here and there, a pattern reflective of the state. Perhaps it should not be surprising that inclusion of children with disabilities occurs more frequently in wealthier school, particularly in several Oakland County districts. Southfield Public Schools passed a board level commitment to inclusion in 1996. Birmingham schools have engaged an initiative to return students from center programs to local schools with increasingly inclusive options. Farmington Public Schools (1994) developed a comprehensive ten-year strategic plan for elementary schools that commits all schools to implementing inclusive education. These shifts, however, reflect much dialogue and learning. Numbers of highly educated individual parents have insisted on inclusive education for their children with success in these districts.

In both Wayne County outside Detroit and Macomb County, both largely populated by working class families, segregated services are strongly imbedded. This particularly occurs in Macomb County where the Intermediate School District directly operates large, well-funded special education schools. Some districts, such as Wyandotte Public Schools, have led the way with co- teaching models for students with mild disabilities having operated since the late 1980's, substantive mainstreaming efforts of students with moderate disabilities, and placement

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[12] Gibson, R. & Peterson, M. (2001). Whole schooling: Implementing progressive school reform. In Wayne E. Ross (Ed.). The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities. New York: State University of New York Press.

[13] Gibson, R. & Peterson, M. (2001). Whole schooling: Implementing progressive school reform. In Wayne E. Ross (Ed.). The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities. New York: State University of New York Press.

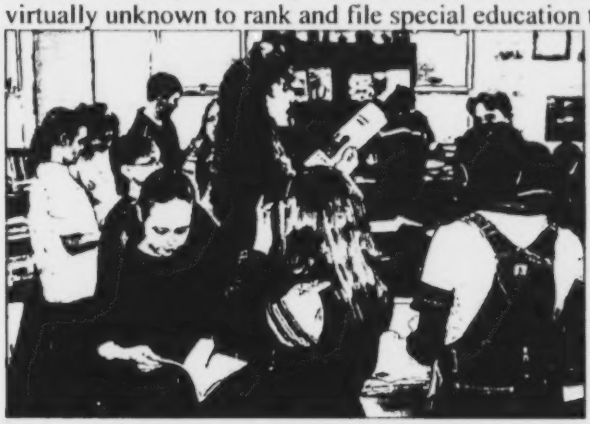
[14] Schmidt, S. (1999, July). Detroit educators organize for democratic schools. Substance, 24(11), 1, 27-28.

severe disabilities in a prominent place in the local high school[15]. Despite these positive efforts, most services remain largely segregated.

Detroit schools are highly segregated, maintaining historic patterns and movement towards inclusive education has been minimal. The system operates 13 segregated schools for students with moderate to severe disabilities. A small number of 'outreach programs' for students labeled as trainable mentally retarded have self-contained classes in general education schools. In almost all schools, students labeled as learning disabled or educable mentally impaired are educated in self-contained classes[16]. Until recently, some schools contain no special education students at all; students are transferred to other schools if they are identified as having a disability.

Some mainstreaming does occur in some schools, typically for very short periods of time. In some schools, outdated models in which students are 'mainstreamed' into classes that match their presumed mental age are used. Thus, in two schools, 13-year-old students with mental retardation were mainstreamed into a 3rd grade class[17].

Recently, some work toward inclusive education has occurred. In 1994, the district established a study group for inclusive education and identified the move toward more "inclusionary options" as part of the special education strategic plan[18]. This goal, however, was virtually unknown to rank and file special education teachers and school principals[19]. A short-term project funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council sought to work in schools where parents were insisting on inclusion for children with more severe disabilities. However, this project was abandoned by the district prior to its completion. During this time, some resource rooms were established, moving away from full time self-contained placement for students with mild learning disabilities, a move seen as a major reform in an otherwise totally segregated system[20].



Work in Head Start has been a high point in establishing one effort toward inclusive education. In the 1997-1998 school year, 205 children with diagnosed disabilities were enrolled in Detroit's Head Start, slightly over the federally mandated 10% of enrollment. These children were included in regular Head Start classes with support services. Efforts to transition young children into inclusive placements have been fraught with difficulty and resistance to date,

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[15] Peterson, M., Feen, H., Silagy, M. & Tamor, L. (2000). Whole Schooling Research Project: Field Notes. Detroit, Michigan: College of Education, Wayne State University.

[16] Detroit Public Schools. (2001). Efficiency and effectiveness report. Detroit, Michigan.

[17] Peterson, M., Gibson, R., and Feen, H. (1999). Whole Schooling Research in Michigan: Initial Analysis. Unpublished paper. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University.

[18] Detroit Public Schools. (1994) Special education strategic plan. Detroit Public Schools: Detroit, Michigan.

[19] Peterson, M., Gibson, R., and Feen, H. (1999). Whole Schooling Research in Michigan: Initial Analysis. Unpublished paper. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University.

[20] Peterson, M. (1997). Inclusive education in Michigan: A story of educational change. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

despite efforts by Head Start staff to develop collaborative programs with special education-funded PPI (Pre-primary Impaired) self-contained classes in Detroit elementary schools[21].

During the 1990's a few abortive efforts a to establish inclusive education in Detroit schools through collaborative work between local school staff and university faculty of the Whole Schooling Consortium also took place. At one high school, a special education department head had worked for ten years laying a foundation for inclusion. However, the implementation of plans for establishing inclusive education in this school was halted by administrative action[22]. As part of the Annenberg initiative, faculty of the Whole Schooling Consortium provided substantial assistance to a cluster of three elementary schools that adopted the Five Principles of Whole Schooling to guide their school reform efforts. Ultimately, however, as schools were awarded money to implement school renewal efforts, they backed away from this commitment[23].

As of this writing, the direction of the new administration of Detroit Public Schools is not clear. The new CEO, Kenneth Burnley, certainly has had opportunity to observe and understand inclusive education as superintendent of Colorado Springs school system. He has hired a special education director with a reputation for promoting unification of general and special education. Beginning in the fall of 2000, special education students who were previously bussed across town are being returned to their neighborhood schools. In April of 2001, the Burnley announced reform and change efforts to improve the schools that included a commitment to "move towards full compliance with federal law by relocating special education students from self-contained settings to least restrictive environments."[24] A district newsletter published on the same date announced a commitment to "improve service to special education students" and "enhance the district's ability to use inclusion and mainstreaming to benefit regular and special education students."[25] The comprehensive study of the schools upon which this initiative was based articulated key problems with segregation and the need to establish pilot inclusive education programs while moving all schools towards effective inclusive options. As part of the implementation of the district's restructuring plan, several special education schools are being closed and these students are being transferred as a group to wings of high schools[26]. In May of 2001, 30 principals were brought to a meeting for training on inclusion for students with mild disabilities. While beginnings, these moves represent dramatic shifts in practice and policy in this district. In spite of these administrative changes, segregation remains the primary service delivery model for Detroit special education students.

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[21] Office of Early Childhood Education, (1999). Head Start program data. Detroit: Detroit Public Schools.

[22] Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Rodgers, A., Arnold, A. (1998). For better or worse: Building inclusive schools in poor urban and rural communities. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

[23] Peterson, M. (2000). Assessment of Strengths and Needs: Eastside Detroit Whole Schooling Cluster. Detroit, Michigan: Whole Schooling Consortium, Wayne State University.

[24] Burnley, K. April 5, 2001

[25] Detroit Public Schools. (2001). Efficiency and effectiveness report. Detroit, Michigan.

[26] Detroit Public Schools, April 5, 2001

WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

VI.1 INCLUDE ALL:
All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, and age.

KEY FINDINGS

Successful inclusion requires breaking the assumed link between diagnosis of a disability and a "treatment" in the form of a specialized (segregated) educational program.

School communities are unaware of the incidence of disability in the larger community that they serve, and are therefore unable to assess the degree to which their inclusive efforts are successful. (They do not know "who is missing".)

Inclusiveness is a function of classroom culture and pedagogical approach, not the specific characteristics of the individual students in a specific classroom.

An inclusive teacher must have a large repertoire of means for assessing his or her own success with the various students in his or her classroom.

General education teachers were generally not involved in the creation of the IEPs of special education students in their classrooms and often do not even have copies of the plan.

SCHOOLWIDE INCLUSION
Inclusion As A Part Of A School Culture

A basic tenet of Whole Schooling is the education of all students together, in the same classrooms, as members of genuine classroom communities. "All students" means all students who live in the neighborhood or "catchement area" served by the school, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, disability, or talent. Just as important, individual classrooms are not subdivided into static groupings along any of the lines of difference just listed. That is to say, neither schools nor individual classrooms are tracked according to academic ability or other factors.

Over recent decades, many forces have operated to make such genuinely inclusive schools rare indeed, even in very rural areas. The proliferation of separate programs, whether in separate buildings or in separate classrooms within the neighborhood school, may be in part reflective of a simple unwillingness to be inclusive in the face of growing diversity, but it is also reflective of the emphasis on specialization that permeates American culture. The public view of education often reflects a medical view in which students are diagnosed with learning needs and the school

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then provides treatment. It is widely believed that such treatment can be most efficiently provided when students are grouped together by their needs. This belief persists despite a steadily growing literature that shows that it is unfounded, particularly with respect to students with disabilities and learning difficulties, but also with respect to most other groups that tend to be segregated by the education system[1].

There is a continuum of arguments to be made in favor of inclusive education moving from narrowly defined achievements for individual students to broad issues of social justice. At the academic end is the belief that students' academic needs, even when fairly narrowly defined, are in fact better met in well-taught inclusive classrooms than in segregated, tracked, or ability-grouped classrooms. Some people make this argument only for students with disabilities or other "differences"; others make it for all students. At the other end is the belief that schools serve far more, and more important, functions than merely imparting those narrowly defined academic skills. The broader purpose of public schooling is addressed directly in the second principle of Whole Schooling: Empowerment of Citizens in a Democracy. Many participants in Whole Schooling see this latter issue as a matter of basic social justice. For example, there is concern that in "traditional" schools, innovative teaching techniques like cooperative learning groups, writing workshops, and multiage classrooms are reserved for students carrying "gifted" labels, while other students are denied access to the pedagogical methods most likely to help succeed in all aspects of schooling.

Table VI.1-1: Reasons to Create an Inclusive School

Better Academic Outcomes for Individual Students
- With disabilities or other differences
- Without disabilities or other differences

Better Social-Emotional Outcomes for Students
- With disabilities or other differences
- Without disabilities or other differences

Better Preparation of Students for Their Adult Roles
- Tolerance
- Teamwork
- Social skills

Social Justice

The range of reasons for creating an inclusive school is summarized in Table 1. The schools described in this study, like most schools attracted to the Whole Schooling model, see these issues as intertwined. They vary in the relative emphasis on one argument versus another, with Evergreen Elementary placing the most emphasis on acquisition of academic skills and Hamilton placing the most emphasis on preparing for the adult world and social justice. Interestingly, it appears that when the primary emphasis is on academic success, fairly narrowly defined, as it is at Evergreen, the social justice concern does not necessarily grow. However, when social justice is the starting point, experience with inclusive practice brings about a growing commitment to inclusive practices as best instructional practices. This may well account for the vastly different outcomes at Evergreen and Hamilton to date. The inclusive effort at Evergreen has apparently come to a halt: the job has been declared done, even though the three students with the most severe disabilities were all withdrawn from the school by their parents at the end of last year, and there remains considerable confusion about the roles of

1 Allington, Richard L. and Walmsley, Sean A (eds). No Quick Fix: Rethinking Literacy Programs in American Elementary Schools. New York, Teachers College Press, 1995.

co-teaching, push-in, and pull-out support services. There is also little concern about what happens to students with disabilities after they graduate to middle school. Conversely, the commitment to inclusion has continued to increase at Hamilton, and is spreading to at least three other schools in the district. Staff members frequently express concern about students' experiences when they move on to middle school and suggest that better bridges must be built to insure smooth transitions.

Schools discussed in this report vary widely in the degrees and types of diversity found in their student populations. Virtually all of the schools are relatively homogeneous with respect to family income and socioeconomic status. For the schools in the metropolitan Detroit area, this is consistent with the high degree of segregation so that most political boundaries (cities, towns, and townships) define relatively homogeneous populations with respect to this dimension. The remaining schools are all located in rural or semi rural areas where again relative homogeneity would be expected.

The schools vary widely in the degree to which there is diversity along racial/ethnic lines. Some schools are not diverse: of the two schools in Detroit, one is almost entirely African-American; the other is almost entirely Hispanic. Rogers High School is in a virtually all-white, blue-collar suburb close to the city, and the rural schools have very few nonwhite students. The suburban schools are far more diverse along this dimension. Similarly, there is wide variation with respect to linguistic diversity. Some of the schools serve student bodies for whom English is the universal first language. One school serves a largely Spanish-speaking neighborhood. Meadowview and Hamilton both are in districts where official records show 40 or more first languages spoken in students' homes, with the most frequent non-English first language being Arabic. Indeed, Hamilton houses its district's English as a Second Language support services office.

Table VI.1-2: Dimensions of Diversity

Universal:

- Academic/cognitive ability
- Physical/sensory ability
- Social/emotional status
- Level of parent involvement
- Stability and emotional comfort of home life

Site-Specific:

- Racial and ethnic diversity
- Socioeconomic diversity
- Linguistic diversity
- Religious/cultural diversity

Regardless of the demographic and socioeconomic makeup of a school's student body, a central dimension of variation exists everywhere: academic or cognitive ability. Similarly, there is always variation in students' home situation, the degree of parent involvement in the school, motor skills, socio-emotional development, and so forth. Thus, when inclusion is defined in Whole Schooling terms, the creation of inclusive classrooms remains a challenge in every school, even those with superficially homogeneous student populations, if inclusive classrooms are communities in which all students are valued and all students have equal access to resources, acclaim, and respect. Such communities entail a culture of mutual support and mutual responsibility, with rapidly changing alliances between students as they move from task to task or theme to theme. As a result, there is very little use of ability grouping and a strong

commitment to creating a learning community in which all members are both teachers and learners, often simultaneously.

Meadowview had the clearest history of inclusion across ability levels at the outset of this study, and in spite of some recent backsliding due to higher-level administrative changes, it remains the only school that routinely includes students with learning disabilities and mild to moderate cognitive and emotional impairments in general education classrooms full time. There is no "resource room" and the special education teachers and support staff serve labeled students within typical classroom settings. Enrichment programs serve the entire school, not just students with "gifted" labels. Until the 2001-2002 school year, Meadowview had multiage classrooms for students of all ages, not just for lower elementary grades. Many teachers devote considerable effort to creating inclusive and strong classroom and school communities, as well as to creating learning contexts that serve all their students well.

A student with serious behavioral challenges is supported in re-entering a kindergarten classroom.

Armstrong has also been long committed to creating an inclusive school community and also has no resource room or self-contained special education classrooms. Support staff provide most services via co-teaching and there is particular commitment to meeting students' emotional and behavioral needs, even when they are extremely challenging. However, Armstrong classrooms make extensive use of ability grouping, a pedagogical approach that works against genuinely inclusive classrooms. Also, Armstrong serves only the lower elementary grades. Students move from Armstrong to an upper elementary school that does not share its commitment to inclusive education or the Whole Schooling principles.

The other schools have varying degrees of inclusive practice; most are moving away from models where most special services (special education, gifted education, English language assistance, remedial reading, etc.) are delivered in separate places to models where these services are delivered within general education classrooms. However, in some cases, the movement has not been all the way into the general education classroom, but merely into the hallway just outside the general education classroom. At Evergreen and Hamilton, for example, there are tables and chairs placed in all classroom hallways to provide workspace for support staff who are pulling out students receiving one type of service or another.

Placement of Students in School Classes: Who gets included and why?
Inclusion is not a special education issue.

As just described above, "inclusion" is not a special education issue. The most obvious dimensions of variation used as a basis for exclusion in the schools included in this report, aside from disability, are "giftedness" and lack of English language proficiency. At Hamilton, students with "gifted" labels are routinely pulled out for "enrichment" activities and students who are learning English are pulled out for language instruction and assistance with their studies. The

district where Gleason School is located runs a separate magnet program for "gifted" students in the upper elementary grades, so that these students are removed from their neighborhood school and bused to another school where the program is housed in a separate suite of classrooms and where students have little interaction with the rest of the school population. The school that houses the "gifted" program is about to open another segregated program, a center program for students labeled "severely emotionally impaired" from across the county.

Beyond classroom placement, as we pointed out earlier, is the issue of creating a single, inclusive classroom community versus a classroom that is subdivided and/or has some students who remain marginalized throughout most of the school day. Ability grouping was most apparent at Armstrong, where the co-teaching model in place tended to involve subdividing the class into relatively stable groupings and then offering small group instruction provided by teacher, co-teachers, or support staff. This kind of subdivision also occurred in the supposedly multiage classrooms at Evergreen School. There, students in a 1-2 multiage classroom actually were attending a program where the two grades were separated for instruction under the assumption that the second graders were more advanced than the first graders. The exception to this division was mostly students identified with special education labels; they stayed with the grade one group even during their second year in the classroom. Occasionally, it was reported, a very "advanced" student might be included in the second grade group while in first grade. This contrasted markedly with the 1-2 multiage classroom at Meadowview, where status as a "novice" or a "veteran" had little to do with the support provided for academic learning. As we describe in the chapter on Multilevel Teaching, Meadowview's multiage teachers are engaged in genuine multilevel teaching, whereas Evergreen's are teaching traditional "splits". It is clear that the mere labeling of a classroom as multiage does not imply a truly inclusive community, merely a wider age range of students housed together.

Labeling of students.

Formal labeling of students is often associated with a breakdown in inclusive practice, although this need not be the case – and should not be when Whole Schooling is fully implemented. The rate at which students are labeled varies widely among the schools. To some extent, this may reflect variations in the local community served by the school. This is most obviously true with respect to "ESL" labels and labels associated with socioeconomic status like "Title I" and "at-risk." In addition, it appears that there is a higher level of disability in the general community in some areas than in others. However, it was also clear that labeling rates are a complex function of school and community belief systems on the one hand, and willingness to expend resources for students with specific special needs on the other.

Several schools, including Armstrong, Evergreen, and Meadowview, have strong institutional commitments to avoid labeling students during the first two or three years of school, usually from kindergarten through grade two. There is a belief that children's developmental patterns vary so widely during that period, and that schools are engaged in leveling the effect of variations in home experiences during that period, so label assignments become fairly arbitrary. Thus, younger children carry disability labels only when those disabilities are relatively severe and have clear medical underpinnings. There is also a belief that labels, or at least labels other than "gifted," can be stigmatizing and can also become self-fulfilling prophecies. It is better, these school communities believe, to support each child as best one can and avoid categorically subdividing the student population.

On the other hand, schools like Hamilton rely heavily on labeling. There is a strong belief that information gained from evaluations is useful for classroom teachers and that referrals to special education can generate additional resources (support staff, training, materials) to help students maximize their educational experiences and perhaps avoid difficulties later on in school and in life. Members of these school communities express the suspicion that schools avoiding labeling do so at least in part to save money. If students are not given labels that tie to resource expenditures, then the school district saves money at the expense of high quality education. However, the emphasis on labeling is so strong in Hamilton's district that in actuality few students are newly identified during the first few years of school. Instead, the district has large numbers of toddlers and preschoolers who already carry disability labels. New identifications arise predominantly when learning disabilities are suspected as academic content becomes more challenging. In the past, parents of preschoolers identified for special education services were steered into special programs once their children reached kindergarten age. As a result, it was easy for elementary schools to imagine that there simply were no children with disabilities in the neighborhoods they served. This is slowly changing as attitudes in the district's early childhood centers change and inclusive practices begin to be implemented there.

Retired teacher mentors and reads with students in the hall.

In a sense, one can argue that pressures against labeling come from both the left (desire to avoid stigma and treat everyone "the same") and the right (desire to save money). The combination of these two pressures can have two results: either the school moves to become truly inclusive under a definition like that of Whole Schooling, or the school perpetuates the traditional model of teaching to the "average" students and leaving the others more or less on their own to do the best they can. Just as the desire to avoid labeling is a double-edged sword, so is the desire to use diagnostic labeling to its maximum to enhance teaching and garner resources. In particular, the belief that labeling is useful for classroom teachers tends to encourage the belief that specific diagnoses require specific pedagogical approaches. This belief in turn tends to support segregating students by label in the name of efficiency: students needing the same pedagogy are grouped together in separate classrooms. Specially trained teachers must be needed to deliver the special pedagogy required by a specific diagnosis. The change in belief system observed at Hamilton over the course of the study suggests a change in this last belief: the teaching and administrative staff still believes that evaluation and labeling is useful, but no longer believes that it logically follows that students should be segregated by label. We suspect that breaking the logical chain at precisely this link is vital to creating high quality inclusive schools.

Students with disabilities.

For all of the schools described in this report, institutional interest in inclusion has focused primarily on students with high incidence learning disabilities. In all of the schools, for students with LD labels there has been a move to discontinue full-time placement in separate classrooms and to limit time spent in resource rooms or "pull-out " into hallways and other small spaces. Meadowview and Armstrong have gone the farthest with this philosophy and have no resource room and little provision for temporary pull-outs. The movement toward inclusion of these students has been initiated by the schools, rather than by parents.

At the other end of the disability spectrum, several of the schools are including students with low incidence, severe disabilities in their general education classrooms, often with extensive supports. This is most true at Hamilton, Evergreen, and Armstrong. In these situations, however, inclusion has been instigated by parents, who often report a great deal of initial resistance from district and school level administrators. It is probably significant that the highest level of inclusion of students with severe disabilities is found in the most affluent suburban school and the two most rural schools. Transporting students to special programs is challenging in rural areas, and total numbers of students in such center programs may be so low that the programs may be unusually costly. There may also be a stronger sense of community in these areas so that students with disabilities are seen first as community members and only second as "special ed" students. In the most affluent district, some parents have taken the initiative to learn about educational options on their own, becoming experts on inclusive practice. At the same time, they are not intimidated by the school institution and are comfortable insisting on an educational plan that may be very different from "what is usual". The remaining schools are in larger urban and suburban districts where there are large special education departments invested in maintaining separate programming for "their" students. In addition, parents who are less educated and/or less inclined to challenge the "experts" (the teachers and special education administration) are less likely to push for inclusive education if the district assumes that placement in segregated programs and self-contained classrooms is what the student needs. This assumption is pervasive throughout Michigan, which continues to have state special education rules that stress a label-and-place approach to special education programming.

Student with cerebral palsy joins peers in a reading lesson.

In any case, the schools we examined tend to include students with high incidence and mild disabilities in general education classrooms under various support models, and to a lesser degree to include students with low incidence, severe disabilities, usually supported by a paraprofessional aide. The students missing in many of the schools are those with mid-range

disabilities. These students carry labels of "educable mentally impaired (EMI)," "trainable mentally impaired (TMI)," and "emotionally impaired (EI)" under the Michigan classification system. Some of the schools in this report do routinely include students with EMI or EI labels, particularly Meadowview, Evergreen, and Armstrong. Other schools are in districts that so routinely send students with these labels to separate programs that school staff are completely unaware of they are being any such students residing in the area served by the school. In fact, parents of these students may never come in contact with staff from their neighborhood schools at all. Instead, they are steered directly from Early Intervention and "preprimary impaired" programs to segregated programs housed elsewhere, often out of district, without ever talking to anyone at the neighborhood school. As a result, school staff are completely unaware that these students even exist. This point was brought home very clearly when project staff began asking administrators and special education support staff how many students in their cachement areas are attending public special education programs elsewhere. The universal response was surprise – it had never occurred to school staff that there might be students right down the street who were never examining the option of attending their neighborhood schools.

Who else is missing?

All of the schools in this report are located in areas where there are private or parochial schools drawing students who might otherwise attend the local public schools. In addition, growth of the homeschooling movement makes it likely that there are also children in each cachement area being schooled by their parents or by unofficial homeschooling organizations. It is striking that little awareness of this "competition" was shown by staff at any of the schools. Like students with disabilities, these students had no existence to the staff at their neighborhood schools. This situation makes it very clear that the link between the school community and the larger community in which the school is located is tenuous at best, especially in the non-rural schools where many school staff do not live in the communities served by their schools.

INCLUDE ALL
Classroom Level

Who gets included and why?

Whatever the overall policy and philosophy at the building or district level, the individual classroom is the central unit in building inclusive community, especially at the elementary school level. (This project initially included two high schools, but one dropped out for reasons that will be discussed later. The other will be discussed separately.) At all of the schools in the project, students stayed with their homeroom teachers for almost the entire day. At the end of the project,

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Meadowview moved toward "departmentalization" in the upper elementary grades, but no school used this structure doing the data collection period. There was some teaming of teachers, however. At Evergreen, some teachers cooperated for social studies instruction, with students moving from one classroom to the other. At Hamilton, there was a regrouping of students in the upper grades for mathematics instruction, creating large ability groups by reorganizing students from several homerooms. Hamilton also has an "enrichment" program during which students choose non-academic electives and mix with students from other classrooms and grade levels while pursuing their chosen interests. Likewise, Avery instituted a fifth grade "book club" during which fifth graders were regrouped – but not by ability – and met in smaller groups to discuss books the club read together. Overall, however, the classroom was the primary social unit in each school.

In most cases, teachers have some say in whether or not their classrooms include students who are "being included" rather than being served in self-contained special programs. At Evergreen, grade level teachers get together and decide where "their" students should be assigned the next year. Teachers attempt to create groupings that will work well socially and also to match students to teaching and personality styles. At other schools, principals may attempt to do the same thing, but they do it more or less on their own, inviting input from individual teachers or support staff.

The model used for providing support services to students with disabilities also helps determine the make-up of individual classrooms. For example, in schools making extensive use of co-teaching tend to locate students with mild to moderate disabilities in classrooms that have co-teachers. This results in a higher density of such students in those classes than in the others. Students with more severe disabilities, for whom the co-teachers would not be the sole or even major conduits for support, end up in classrooms without co-teachers. This helps keep the proportion of students with disabilities slightly closer to natural proportions, but deprives those students of any benefits the co-teacher might be able to provide. Instead, primary support comes from a paraprofessional, who may or may not have any skills, training, or experience in providing educational supports to anyone at all, let alone a student with intense needs.

General and special education teachers coach and support students as they work on a writing and research project.

Grouping students with disabilities together within a subset of general education classrooms is usually called "clustering," and occurs even when co-teaching is not the primary service delivery model. For example, Hamilton does not use co-teaching, but at first chose to cluster students by disability label in the belief that this would make it easier for the special education staff to provide support and for the classroom teacher to adapt curriculum and explore new teaching techniques. As a result of participation in the study and the self-reflection participation entailed, Hamilton has

moved away from clustering in favor of distributing students with disabilities throughout all classrooms, thereby maintaining natural proportions both within and across disability labels.

Learning to teach inclusively.

Fairly early in the study, the eye of a researcher walking the halls at Hamilton school was drawn to Larry's third grade classroom by intriguing student work displayed outside the door. Upon entering, the researcher was welcomed to stay but was informed "this is not an inclusion room this year." What Larry meant was that there were no students with disability labels included full time in his classroom. Observations in his classroom, however, quickly led the researcher to ask, "Is the presence of students with disability labels a requirement for being an 'inclusive classroom'?" Over the course of the project, the answer that clearly emerged was "no": Inclusiveness is a function of classroom culture and pedagogical approach, not of the specific characteristics of the individual students in a specific classroom during a specific time period.

Larry and Tina, a third grade teacher at Evergreen, were teachers who ascribed most vigorously to a constructivist approach to education. In both of their classrooms, the various standards and benchmarks that define the curriculum at the district and state levels are embedded in coherent learning experiences involving authentic tasks, hands-on learning, a mixture of both independent and cooperative learning, and a strong emphasis on personal goal setting and evaluation in light of those personal goals. In other words, these classrooms were demonstrations of the approach described as multilevel teaching and discussed at length later in this report. However, neither teacher had "inclusion students" during the course of the project. Further, it seemed that neither Tina nor the co-principals at Evergreen thought of the constructivist approach as appropriate to inclusive education, assuming instead that students with disabilities, particularly cognitive disabilities, could not thrive in such settings. The fact that this is not true was amply demonstrated in a classroom at Meadowview, where Melanie, another upper elementary teacher who could be described as "constructivist" was successfully creating an inclusive community across many dimensions of diversity, including significant cognitive disability.

Active and collaborative learning gave students opportunities to support one another.

All three teachers, Larry, Tina, and Melanie, as well as several others observed in this project, create classroom communities where students work independently, alone or in small groups, on a variety of tasks centered on a curricular theme. The teachers use a variety of approaches, sometimes offering direct instruction but more often structuring hands-on learning contexts, facilitating group work, helping students learn to set goals and evaluate their own progress, and so forth. They monitor their own success

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as teachers on a moment-by-moment basis by looking for indicators in the student behavior as well as more concrete aspects of both process and product.

Listening to Larry talk, both in private conversations and in larger groups, it became clear that a particular challenge to him was finding ways in which to monitor the progress of students with disabilities in his class. The techniques he relied on were not working well, and he therefore felt unsuccessful as a teacher. In fact, from the observer's perspective, it was not Larry's teaching that was unsuccessful; it was just his monitoring system.

Larry brought up his concerns at a faculty meeting where Hamilton's efforts at including students with disabilities were being discussed:

> Larry: Serena has been "escaping." It's hard on my self-esteem! I don't feel I'm doing a great job with her. She's not interacting much with other kids.
>
> Nora [special education teacher]: She talks about you all the time . . . and the classroom. She talks a lot about what she does in "her" classroom.
>
> Some general education teachers think if the kid isn't getting it, they're failing. But just getting them involved and trying is success. You need different markers for those kids.

This interaction also illustrates an important role that special education teachers can play for general education teachers – helping them understand different ways to gauge progress with children and providing feedback of the efficacy of their efforts.

Although Larry had no students with disabilities in his classroom full-time during the observation phase of the study, he did have students who were mainstreamed for significant portions of the day. One boy, Justin, was theoretically joining his class for "reading" and therefore appeared at his doorway when formal reading instruction was on her agenda for the day. His comings and goings were accommodated as best Larry could manage, something that was difficult given his commitment to what he called "student-centered learning" and student-set agendas. Thus, Justin was indeed present for most of the time that Larry spent with whole group reading activities. Unfortunately, when this phase of reading instruction ended, Justin would leave. Larry expressed great frustration over this and Justin himself rarely seemed eager to leave unless his special education homeroom was about to do the prototypical special education activity, a bowling outing. In fact, reading was so thoroughly integrated throughout the school day that it was impossible to be mainstreamed into Larry's class "for reading." Although Larry felt that his class offered Justin something important and he was

welcomed by the students, he could not feel successful about either Justin's progress in reading or his membership in Larry's classroom community. Justin was receiving only a fraction of the reading instruction Larry offered, and what he did receive was disjointed because the rest of the class continued while Justin was back with his special education class. He was not a member of the classroom community because he did not share in their activities, could not be counted on to "be there" for every aspect of a project, and did not participate in the many activities Larry used to consciously create a distinctive classroom culture.

In this case, Larry's usual monitoring systems were working well. It was the situation that was causing problems. Justin looked like any other student while in Larry's class – he participated in the same way and at the same rate, he maintained eye contact when he was speaking, he stayed on task, and so forth. Yes, the kind of performance that might be measured on a test might be lower than other students, but Larry could adjust for that. His frustration with Justin was that his classroom was deliberately designed to present a coherent, day-long educational experience and it did not easily accommodate a student who dropped in only for an hour or so each day. It was teachers' experiences with students like Justin that led many of the Hamilton teachers to join their principal in the belief that mainstreaming was not the best way to deliver special education services to Hamilton students with learning disabilities and mild/moderate cognitive impairments. By the end of the project, situations like Justin's had been largely eliminated as time in the special education room was decreased or eliminated and special education students became fulltime members of general education classroom communities.

The situation of Serena, another student mainstreamed into Larry's classroom for part of the day raised issues that continue even when mainstreaming is abandoned in favor of fulltime inclusion. Serena was present for more time than for Justin, but not "for reading", as her more severe cognitive disabilities had led to a "special" reading program in the special education classroom. In the eyes of the observing researchers, Serena was thriving in Larry's classroom. She seemed interested in the curriculum content, operated autonomously to carry out the independent tasks that addressed her goals within the classroom, had some success in group tasks, and seemed to be an accepted member of the classroom community.

Larry, however, felt unsuccessful with Serena. Conversations with Larry quickly made it clear that Larry's usually ways of tracking his own success as a teacher were not working with Serena. For example, like many teachers, Larry relies on eye contact with students as a measure of student engagement. However, some students with disabilities, particularly vision impairment, autism, and more severe cognitive impairments (as well as some students without disability labels) tend to avoid eye contact even when engaged in listening to a teacher or following a group discussion. Absence of eye contact from Serena made Larry feel unsuccessful, even though an observer could see that indeed Serena was well engaged with the classroom activity.

This difficulty in monitoring student involvement and progress by watching body language, level of verbal participation in discussions, eye contact, and other physical demonstrations is challenging to many of the best teachers, who use these indices to track how things are going in their classrooms moment-to-moment. Particularly when the teacher tries to stay away from using tests and finished products as the primary means of assessing student learning, the inability to easily use other accustomed measures leaves her with little to go on. In addition, she may not even know what a mainstreamed student's IEP goals are, and in any case she is not certain how they fit into the larger context of access to the general curriculum. As a result, teachers like Larry are concerned that they are not successful with some students when it is the measures of success that may be inadequate, rather than student learning.

What about the IEP?

As is typical throughout Michigan, individualized educational plans are usually established each spring for the following year, especially for students included in general education classrooms[2]. May is widely regarded as IEP month by special education administrators and support staff. This timing is problematic, especially when assignment of students to classrooms is normally done even later in the year or over the summer. As a result, teachers at many project schools stated that they were never involved in the IEPs of incoming students and often never saw the actual plans unless they were provided by the students' parents. The cryptic articulation of the goals in the plans, combined with no knowledge of the discussions that led to these goals, make it difficult to figure out exactly how the plans should be implemented. In addition, the plans are written with no knowledge of the nature of the classroom community in which they are to be implemented and therefore do not capitalize on supports offered by that community nor address potential conflicts with the classroom culture.

Conversations across schools indicated that the difficulties with the IEP process were greater than the exclusion of the general education teacher who was actually to be charged with IEP implementation. Particularly with the federal mandate that all students have "access to" the general curriculum, educators across the board are left confused about the relative importance of individualized goals versus standardized (general curriculum) goals. Statewide standardized testing programs, together with the mandate that the vast majority of students with disabilities will take those tests alongside their nondisabled peers, further the confusion. As a result, throughout the course of the project, researchers heard virtually nothing about IEP goals from general education teachers, except in the case of students with severe disabilities. For those students, IEP goals were at least acknowledged, but the role of the general curriculum went unmentioned.

As can be seen in the chapter on multilevel teaching, the confusion about IEP goals disappears to some extent when multilevel teaching is the predominant pedagogical approach in a classroom. In a sense, all of the students have an individualized plan; the only difference is that the plan is more explicit (and is legally binding) for students with special education labels. In the majority of classrooms in the project, however, multilevel teaching was at best a goal and not the prevailing practice. The response to the IEP problem, as best we could tell, was perhaps the best one and was certainly logical: leave the IEP issues to the special education support staff and focus on the general curriculum. In a school with a cohesive support staff delivering services within the general education classrooms

2 At some segregated special education programs where students do not follow the usual movement from classroom to classroom at the start of each school year, IEP meetings are distributed throughout the year. Otherwise, the administrative need to know who will be where when school opens each fall dictates that plans be established at the end of the preceding school year.

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(Armstrong), this response may well in the end lead toward multilevel teaching and more genuinely inclusive communities. Where the support staff willingly takes responsibility for the IEP and does their work away from the general education classroom (pull-out, pull-aside, or resource room services), however, a barrier is created to prevent creation of genuinely inclusive classrooms.

The federal law requires that "a" general education teacher be present at every student's Individualized Educational Planning meeting, and many IEP training programs for school districts include general education teachers in the district "team". Nonetheless, it is clear that the vast majority of general education teachers have only a cursory understanding of the entire process and its purpose, and have never engaged in substantive discussions of what it means to integrate an IEP (or, in a truly inclusive school, several IEPs) into their on-going daily planning for their classrooms. While no teachers were clamoring for more training programs, materials to read, or meetings to attend, many did acknowledge the need to have a better understanding of what was expected and how best to meet those expectations. For teachers already attempting to implement the Whole Schooling principles, particularly with respect to multilevel, authentic instruction, gaining such an understanding would not be a major undertaking. In addition, effort expended on the issue of aligning individual and classroom goals would pay off for every student since the teachers explicitly acknowledge the need for such alignment, whether or not any individual student has a disability label.

Students with "severe" disabilities

Grade K - 5

Very often, schools are considered "inclusive" even when there have never been students with severe disabilities enrolled, the schools are not physically accessible to those who use wheelchairs, and so forth. For example, at a recent presentation to the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council Education Workgroup, a representative of the Michigan State Department of Education described a study of four "inclusive" schools carried out with state funding. When asked whether any of the schools had students with severe disabilities, she said that she thought not, although she was not absolutely sure. Throughout the state, students with severe disabilities, particularly those with severe cognitive impairments, have been so routinely sent to segregated programs, often outside district administrative control, that many school-level administrators are unaware that these students exist in the neighborhoods served by their schools. Even district-level administrators forget they exist: the special education director handles the paperwork transferring responsibility for these students to some other entity and the students disappear from district consciousness. (The special programs are most frequently run by Intermediate School Districts, which in Michigan roughly correspond to counties, so that responsibility for the students

effectively shifts from the local district to the entity running the segregated program, either another district or the ISD itself.)

At the same time, however, many inclusion researchers and activists believe that inclusion of students with severe disabilities is one of the most effective catalysts for changing a school or district culture to one that genuinely embraces all students, regardless of disability labels. Complicating the inclusion of students with severe disabilities is that fact that many, perhaps most, Michigan parents believe that segregated programs are best for their children. We suspect that Early Intervention programs, however excellent in many respects, frequently serve to indoctrinate parents into the belief that their children with severe disabilities require the "special" environment and staff of the segregated program. In addition, Michigan special education rules have provided year-round (230-day) schooling to students attending certain categorical programs for students with severe disabilities. Parents were routinely informed that students with the same disability labels, but served outside those segregated programs, would not be eligible for this extended school year[3]. (This is not true: by federal law, the option of "extended school year" is an IEP decision made individually for each student, regardless of disability category. However, parents and concerned school-level educators often difficult or impossible to get reasonable extended school year programming through the IEP process.)

The Michigan state special education rules have included a very complex system of classifying students with respect to degree to disability. Although this system has had many undesirable consequences[4], it did afford our research project a partial means for locating students with the most severe disabilities within local populations. Two Michigan classifications carry the word "severe" and indeed refer to situations in which students typically have high levels of support needs: "severely mentally impaired" (SMI[5]) and "severely multiply impaired" (SXI[6]). In addition, the "autistically impaired" label has traditionally been connected with assignment to either "type A" or "type B" programs. Type A indicates attendance at a self-contained "AI program or classroom", where as Type B indicates that the student is receiving special education services in some other setting, including but not necessarily an inclusive setting[7]. Similarly, the "emotionally impaired (EI)" label often leads to assignment to an "EI" classroom, referred to by some administrators as a "basic" classroom, but sometimes leads to assignment to a "severely emotionally impaired" (SEI) program or classroom. SEI programs are often seen as analogous to "day treatment" programs operated by the mental health system and are assumed to serve students with significant mental illness or mental disturbance.

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3 A recent attempt at rule revision was recently defeated due to strong opposition from educators, parents, and advocacy organizations. As a result, the barriers to inclusive education long present in the Michigan rules will continue in place for the foreseeable future. (The full rules revision package contained some very positive changes, but also a number of sweeping administrative changes that left virtually all stakeholders so uncertain as to the quality and equity of future special education services that the public resistance was almost universal.)

4 Most of the time, students are matched to segregated education programs that carry labels matching their own disability classification; that is, a student labeled "severely multiply impaired" was placed in a "severely multiply impaired classroom, and student with "autism" was placed in an "autism program", and so forth. Further, eligibility for many social services and other supports was determined by label rather than by individual strengths and needs. Preference for the label-and-place procedure is so strong that IEP forms have a special check-off where parents have to indicate consent if any other placement is agreed upon by the team.

5 Following the close of the data collection phase of this project, Michigan special education rule changes included elimination of the SMI (severely mentally impaired), TMI (trainably mentally impaired), and EMI (educably mentally impaired) categories, combining them into a single CI (cognitively impaired) category. The separate categories for classrooms were maintained, however. It remains to be seen how this inconsistency will play out for students who have fit the traditional label-and-place model, as well as those who are receiving special education supports and services in less restrictive environments.

6 The "severely multiply impaired" (SXI) label was retained in the latest state rule changes.

7 Both the education and social service systems have tended to assume that students in Type A programs have "severe" autism while students in Type B programs have milder autism. This is frequently untrue, particularly with respect to students with autism who are in general education classrooms with fulltime paraprofessional support in addition to other special education services.

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This classification system does not entirely solve the problem of operationally defining "severe disability": the same range of educational needs[8] that exists within the autism category (AI) also exists within "physically or otherwise health impaired" (POHI). Additionally, Michigan did not have a deaf-blind classification until the rule revisions of 2002. Many deaf-blind students carry SXI educational labels, but others may have labels referring either to blindness (VI: "vision impaired") or deafness (HI: "hearing impaired"). While from our point of view, neither a vision impairment nor a hearing impairment alone would necessarily warrant the "severe" label, the combination generally does. At the same time, both blindness and deafness are considered "low incidence" disabilities and in some studies are classified as "severe" on that basis alone. For the purposes of this report, the term "severe disability" refers to the level of disability vis-à-vis support needs that is typical of students carrying SMI, SXI, and SEI labels. Students with other labels who have similar support needs are also considered to have "severe disabilities". Students with less specialized and extensive support needs are not considered to have "severe disabilities".

The schools participating in the Whole Schooling Research Project are unusual in Michigan because several of them have made a commitment to include all students living in their cachement areas, including those with severe disabilities. As a result, the classrooms in our study afforded an opportunity to observe the inclusion of several students with such disabilities, including three students at Evergreen Elementary School, two at Hamilton, two at Meadowview, and two at Armstrong. In addition, this discussion will also include the son of one of the authors of this paper, a boy with "severe multiple disabilities" included in a school located close to Hamilton Elementary (although in another district) and serving a similar population (Gleason School).

The students at Evergreen Elementary included two girls and one boy. By the time the study drew to a close, all three had left the school for segregated programs at the request of their parents. One of the students at Meadowview, who had an EI label and was informally considered to have an "SEI" label, had been transferred to a segregated program at the request of the administration over the objections of the parent. Hamilton, on the other hand, continued to move forward with an active attempt to locate students still attending programs elsewhere and inviting them to reconsider attending general education programs in their neighborhood school. Armstrong is also continuing in its commitment to educate all children together and in the last year of the project engaged in a major struggle to support a student with severe emotional difficulties in remaining at the school. This required enormous effort and creativity on the part of many staff members, as well as coordination with social service and healthcare agencies.

Gleason School has continued to include the one student with severe disabilities for five years, but another boy with similar disabilities was turned away in the past year. His parents

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8 Both researchers and educators use the term "severe disability" very loosely (cite TASH paper, 2000). It sometimes refers only to extremely low incidence disabilities that involve "profound" cognitive impairments, physical disabilities that preclude virtually all intentional movement in most of the body, or very severe social/emotional issues. At other times, and particularly in most of the literature on inclusive education, a disability is considered "severe" if it requires any significant adaptation or modification in order to perform the typical tasks of daily life, including school tasks. Thus, sometimes all students with "mental retardation" are classified as having "severe disabilities," but other times very few individuals with this label are considered to warrant this description. Likewise, one person may describe anyone who relies on a wheelchair as "severely disabled," whereas many other people would not. This situation is particularly noticeable in the case of medical diagnoses like "Down syndrome" and "autism", both of which encompass a very broad range of impact on individuals who carry them. In some discussions of special education, all students with Down syndrome or autism are automatically assumed to have "severe disabilities", whereas in other discussions, very few would be categorized in this way. This lack of clarity makes interpretation of research findings virtually impossible, and is a major frustration to parents and educators looking for guidance with respect to avenues for supporting individual students both in and out of school.

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were told he should remain at the segregated school he was attending because his "needs could be met there". Gleason students with milder disabilities are congregated in a self-contained "EMI/TMI" classroom with increasing but traditional "mainstreaming."[9]

Evergreen Elementary School

Nathan, *a student with mental retardation and behavioral challenges.*

In 1999-2000, Nathan was a third grader who was supported by a full-time aide in a general education classroom. He is a young man with Down syndrome and an EMI (educably mentally impaired) label. Our observations suggest, however, that in another school district his label might reflect a more severe cognitive impairment[10]. Given our own experience with Nathan, we feel that he should be included in the "severe disabilities" category for the purposes of this discussion. With respect to support needs, Nathan fits in the "severe" category as his IEP specified his need for full-time paraprofessional support as well as major curriculum modifications and ancillary services.

In our observations, we were concerned that Nathan appeared to have a separate mini-classroom within the larger room. The physical set up was such that Nathan was in the back corner of the classroom nearest the door: he sat at a large table/desk with his aide next to him and shelves with "his" materials behind him and to one side. He faced the front of the classroom. Next to his area was a table with three or four chairs: this was sometimes used by a co-teacher (special educator) who came in to work with small groups of students. At other times, it may have been used by other students working alone or in small groups, but frequently it was not used at all. In the main area of the classroom, the other students sat at two long tables that ran perpendicular to the front (blackboard) wall. The teacher most often stood at the front of the room, and the overhead projector was positioned to project onto that front wall. As a result, Nathan was the only student facing the front of the room when seated squarely at his desk. Thus, he could see the other students, at least those who did not face the side walls, and they could see him. The teacher could also see him clearly.

In spite of the existence of clear sightlines, however, Nathan appeared to be invisible to the other members of the class. Students would come and go from the classroom, passing directly in front of Nathan, without ever acknowledging his presence. Class discussions proceeded without inviting his participation. The activities in which Nathan was engaged had little or nothing to do with the activities of the rest of the class.

> When we first came in, [the teacher] was directing a whole group activity while the special education co-teacher worked with "her kids" at a table in the back of the

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9 The level of "mainstreaming" at Gleason School steadily increased over the period of the WSRP. During the first and second years of the project, students at Gleason (not a project participant) joined general education classes only for "specials" classes such as art, music, and gym. During the last year, most students in the self-contained special education classroom were also joining general education classes for some portion of the academic day, most often for "stations" – periods when students work in small groups, often playing games or working on projects. None of the project participant schools use this model of "inclusion", but it is probably the most frequently practiced in Michigan.

10 Efforts to use a picture communication system with Nick were observed. He otherwise appeared to be nonverbal. In addition, the activities in which he was engaged were typical of those used with students with Michigan special education labels of "severely" or "trainably" mentally impaired.

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room. "Her kids" apparently did not include Nathan, who was working with an aide at a table. Except for Nathan, everyone was working on math. Nathan was working on a letter puzzle. .

Throughout the [subsequent] reading activity, Nathan continued to work alone with the paraprofessional. Nathan was also doing reading, but using his own set of books and materials not related to the book read by the rest of the class. Nathan was the only student who seemed totally engaged throughout the period. He did "get noisy" at times.

I did not observe any interaction between Nathan and the other students, or anyone else besides his aide.

This is not to say that Nathan did not enjoying some of his activities in the classroom, nor that there was never any connection between general classroom activities and Nathan's activities:

Four children read in a class where the teacher helps children learn to work together and help each other in learning.

They are working on math and are broken into four groups arranged by ability level. One group of three kids is working without a teacher. One aide is with Nathan, a student with Down syndrome. She is working one on one with him have him take plastic coins, name them, and match them to a worksheet. He is very engaged with this task and is having fun, it seems.

Next to him is the special education teacher who is working on money skills on the floor with eight kids. ... At another group, kids have a plasticized restaurant menu. They use markers to indicate what they want to order and then use simulated bills and coins to count out the amount of money that they need for their purchase.

Nathan's situation is the clearest example we have seen of being physically present in a group without being "included" in any way. Although he had a good relationship with his very dedicated paraprofessional aide, he had little or no relationship with the classroom teacher or his classmates. There is, of course, no way of knowing whether he would have appeared more able to the observers if he had been genuinely included in this classroom. It was not a surprise to learn that he had been transferred to a county-level segregated program at the beginning of the following school year. Although the school principal expressed regret over his parents' decision to have him leave, she did not express any feeling that things could have been done differently or better. To the contrary, she appeared to believe that Nathan had been offered a high quality inclusive education. His parents' rejection of his

"placement" seemed to be interpreted as evidence of their lack of understanding of Nathan's limited potential and their unrealistic expectations. Although the research team requested permission to speak with Nathan's parents, no contact information was ever provided and no permission was granted.

Kelly, *a student with cerebral palsy.*

Kelly is a young lady who also attended Evergreen Elementary. She has a label of "severely multiply impaired," and uses a wheelchair and augmentative communication device. She has spastic cerebral palsy and cannot speak clearly, but she is able to control her power wheelchair herself using a joystick. She needs assistance with self-care and classroom tasks. Her categorical label implies a significant cognitive impairment, but it was difficult to assess her cognitive abilities during our observations. During a chance encounter at the school, her father expressed his belief that her cognitive abilities are not impaired. Observation of Kelly working on learning to use her augmentative communication device (Dynavox) suggested a mild level of cognitive impairment, although lack of previous opportunities for learning or low teacher expectations may have been a factor. In any case, she did not have the severe cognitive impairment associated with the SXI label within the Michigan rules[11]

> Kelly is working with special ed teacher and aide, one on each side, on her "letters" using laminated cards and her talker, which has the same "cards" on it. She is working on writing simple words, apparently by matching letters. She does this first with the laminated cards and then on the computer. She is extremely distracted by my presence – I try to wander around the library for while just listening and then sit nearby and "work" on my own computer.
>
> They spend about 20 minutes on letter matching; then teacher asks aide to Kelly show how she handles the lunchroom. Kelly has to call up the set of pictures relating to lunch. She has to be reminded to slow down and look. Teacher asks, "How would you use this to get something to eat?" Aide gives more prompts and Kelly uses talker to ask for a drink. Kelly starts fidgeting when done.

Kelly is an extremely sociable and out-going young lady who understands the speech of others very well. During the last year of the study, Kelly was in the fourth grade. At the end of the year, the principal informed us that Kelly's father, a single parent, had decided to move her to the county program for the next year. The reason relayed to us by the principal was that Kelly had no friends.

Like Nathan, Kelly was supported at Evergreen by a dedicated paraprofessional aide, who seemed on one hand to understand the goals for inclusion for Kelly but on the other hand sometimes to create a barrier. For example, in a period during which Kelly and the aide met with

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[11] In the absence of two separate physical disabilities, the SXI label required a level of cognitive development at least three standard deviations below the mean. Many students with severe physical disabilities in Michigan end up with SXI labels because the label-and-place philosophy has tended to encourage parents and educators to use the SXI label to create an entitlement for a higher level of special education support. Severe physical disabilities often make assessment of cognitive abilities extremely difficult, but the "solution" of frequent application of the SXI label brings about an assumption of severe cognitive impairment even where it may not exist.

the speech therapist to work on reading/writing skills necessary for effective use of Kelly's Dynavox, the aide commented that she tried to keep a few basic social communications available on every screen, so that Kelly could always exchange social greetings with classmates and other people encountered in class and in the hallway. She said that she tried to keep these items in the same place on every screen so Kelly could find them quickly. The speech therapist seemed uninterested in this key aspect of inclusion, and wanted to focus on spelling lessons. However, when we actually observed Kelly in the hallways (in the company of the aide), her Dynavox was often slung behind her wheelchair, making it inaccessible for the kind of spontaneous social interchanges that the aide had expressed concerned about. Kelly did appear to compensate for this with a bright smile directed at anyone who greeted her, but lack of the communication device limited her ability to initiate or maintain interactions. On a similar theme, the aide was also observed expressing a desire for better content-specific vocabulary on various screens to address the communication needs of various classes, subject areas, and social contexts. Again, she seemed to be the only one (other than Kelly and probably her father) who was concerned about this. It was apparently not a concern of Kelly's teachers, the principal, or the speech therapist.

For all of the aide's concern, we never observed Kelly in genuine interaction with peers, nor being treated as a genuine member of her classroom. Perhaps most tellingly of all, observations in the lunchroom revealed Kelly sitting at a table with the aide and another adult, but no other students. No students were observed acknowledging Kelly's existence during lunch. One pre-lunch observation shows how this was set up:

> At the end of the reading, it was time for lunch. The aide got Kelly's things together and wheeled her out of the classroom ahead of the other students. A couple of students did say good-bye, but I don't think Kelly heard them and she could not see them - no real interaction. The aide did not stop or otherwise attempt to facilitate interaction. As in the case of Nathan, it appeared that Kelly is physically present in her class (sometimes) but is not included. In her case, this is more surprising than in Nathan's because she is *interested in socializing and cognitively apparently very capable.*[12]

Kelly was observed in both her third and fourth grade classrooms. At no time did she appear to be a genuine member of the class. Teachers did not call on her, and classmates did not initiate interactions or respond to her smiles. The classroom teachers seemed to view Kelly's education, indeed her entire school experience, as the sole responsibility of the paraprofessional aide.

> When we entered the classroom, students were arranged in a U, but she [Kelly] was off to the side with her aide. The aide explained that her Dynavox battery had unexpectedly gone dead and she had to be close to an outlet for recharging. [No extension cords?] After a while, they moved, with the aide sitting at a desk at one corner of the U and Kelly at her side (outside the corner). The teacher was reading

[12] The "sometimes" comment reflects the observer's impression that personal care needs involve extended absences from the classroom throughout the day. It was unclear whether these absences were actually necessary, but it was clear the Kelly enjoyed them. Far more social interactions (almost always with adults) were observed outside the classroom than in it.

aloud from Willy Wonka, so there was not much interaction between students. Kelly's presence seemed completely ignored.

This episode occurred in the third grade. Things in fourth grade were not appreciably better:

> [The teacher] says the students should divide up into groups of three or four to read together.
>
> One girl chooses to read alone, others form groups. One girl joins Kelly and her aide. The aide is helping Kelly read – as she reads, she moves a lot and drools quite a bit. Aide uses towel to clean up. [The girl who joined Kelly is just watching and following along.] Kelly seems very distracted by my presence, more than the other students. A group of boys behind the aide (on floor) starts tossing a hackysack. Aide reaches behind, catches it, and puts it on her table. The boys calmly get back to work.
>
> [A different aide had taken over at the beginning of this reading period.] At the beginning of math, aides switch again – I think the regular aide had taken a break. The [substitute] aide comes over and asks me if I'm observing Kelly, because they (Kelly and aide) are going to library to work with special ed teacher.
>
> The teacher comes over to talk briefly. Tells me that one of the girls (the one who had joined Kelly) "should be labeled. She's very low." She says that this girl is doing addition facts on the test [now being administered], whereas all the others are doing multiplication. She is doing different work from the rest of the class in both reading and math. [The teacher] says that this girl usually chooses to work with Kelly when students choose partners – it may be easier socially and it does give her extra help.
>
> [On the surface this seems like a good solution, but I wonder if it really is. Would Kelly otherwise be alone? Is the redhead less included and less accommodated because the presence of the aide allows an easy out?]

In any case, other than the one classmate, no one pays any attention to Kelly, including the teacher. When Kelly leaves to see the special education teacher, her leaving is apparently unobserved, although the timing suggests that it was deliberately scheduled to give Kelly an activity during the math test.

In addition to her role as Kelly's private teacher, the aide also seems to have a role as classroom policeman. She disciplines the boys with the hackysack, and their response indicates that this was a normal occurrence. The difficult position of aides who on the one hand are supposed to facilitate inclusion but on the other serve as disciplinarians was observed again in the case of David at Gleason School.

Cheryl, *a child with Down syndrome.*

Cheryl is an Evergreen student with Down syndrome who, like Kelly, is extremely out-going, enthusiastic, and sociable. She seems to have very little oral communication ability, but when observed during 1999-2000, in second grade, she was using sign language in a limited but effective manner. Our records indicate that Cheryl has an SXI label, but observations suggest

that an SMI label would have been more appropriately. These two labels are frequently interchanged because categorical center programs are often "SXI/SMI" programs due to the low incidence of both disability categories and relatively similar high level of support needs.

> Cheryl's "program" seems to be almost entirely under the control of an aide, who is very good at including other students. At several points, Cheryl and friends were the most engaged and animated students in the room. The aide included other students in activities aimed at Cheryl (as best as I could tell), and other students seemed to keep a watch to see when something good was going on so they could join in. Otherwise, for much of the time the students were working independently or in small groups on a variety of projects.
>
> It was noteworthy that Cheryl and her aide seem to be working hard on sign language communication. The aide is clearly making an effort to have interested classmates also learn sign, and several students seemed very interested in doing so.

The observations of Cheryl in her multiage, K-2 classroom, were some of the best instances of inclusion of a student with severe cognitive disabilities found in the Whole Schooling Research Project.

> Colleen [co-teacher] and the one lady [paraprofessional aide?] return arms full of plastic bins with what look like packages of academic exercises.
>
> ...
>
> The lady (a mind reader?) approaches me to tell me what she is doing with Cheryl.

> "We have everything color coded: yellow-math, green-spelling (etc.)
>
> There are tubs with activities. When Cheryl masters an activity, we mark it down and get new supplies for her bin. That way, she keeps learning and we are not bored to death"
>
> ...
>
> The lady is working with Cheryl and also six other kids have joined up. They are signing. What is the sign for___?
>
> Kids gather around Cheryl to see what is new in her bins.. "We all want to see..." says Mrs. Van [teacher]...other lady says [to Cheryl], "tells them (she signs) to back off if you feel crowded."

Another day's observations reported a similar situation:

Marissa the aide is with Cheryl, working on reading. After a while, two other kids come to this table and Cheryl and the boy are working to develop a necklace made of a leather strap and various items to put on it. They are huddled close together.

Cheryl talks with the boy. She holds up a book. The aide talks about it with her. They move on. Cheryl is smiling and the other kid too. After another short while, the aide pulls out another activity. The boy and girl hang around to participate.

We do not have observation records of activities like lunch during that second grade year, but Cheryl's air of expectation of full inclusion, and the comfort of her classmates, suggest that Cheryl's situation was significantly better than that observed the following year, when she was in a traditional third grade classroom. The change occurred even though Cheryl was supported by the same paraprofessional aide she had had the year before:

This is the classroom where Cheryl is included. The desks (2-person trapezoidal tables) are arranged in a nested U formation, with seven tables in the inside U and eight in the outside U. Belinda [the teacher] has a large desk at one side, replacing a couple of desks in the outside U.

When I come in, students are seated at their desks and Cheryl shares a table with an aide closest to the door, but in the outer U, not off by itself. Belinda is finishing some sort of whole class lesson when I come in. She then hands out a worksheet on Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas and gives instructions to the class on how to proceed. She also tells the aide what materials she should now use with Cheryl, who appears to be looking at a book independently.

As time goes on, Belinda calls various students up individually for short consultations. The classroom becomes a little louder, but students seem to be mostly on task. Some start to take books out to read silently. One boy reads something interesting and takes it to read to a couple of his friends and then returns to his seat. The aide mostly reads with Cheryl, but she also assists the boy on the other side of her and offers assistance on request to other students sitting nearby.

...

[The teacher] asks everyone to join her up front, on the floor inside the inner U. Belinda sits on a chair at the front of the group; Cheryl joins the group on her own, sitting fairly close to Belinda. The aide does classroom chores in the back of the room.

Although Cheryl was not nearly so isolated as Nathan had been, nor as completely ignored as Kelly was, her situation had changed much for the worst between second and third grade. Observations in the lunchroom were the most telling:

Cheryl attended lunch without the support of an aide, although it appeared that aides present elsewhere in the lunchroom were keeping an eye on her. She seated herself at a table with girls from her class and proceeded to eat her lunch, looking happy and animated. She seemed to be following the conversation of the girls at her table and to consider herself part of the group. The other girls, however, ignored her. When the girls finished eating, they got up as a group and left, leaving Cheryl behind

without a word. Cheryl continued to eat her lunch and smile, although some of the animation left her face and body. She finished her meal entirely alone.

On that same day, we also observed Kelly eating her lunch:

> Kelly was seated at a table in the middle of the lunchroom while her classmates sat in groups at tables along one wall. Her table companions were two adults, "her" aide, and another paraprofessional. She did not appear to be unhappy, but she did appear to be invisible to the students in the room.

It is noteworthy that the situation for students with milder, higher incidence disabilities at Evergreen was vastly different than that of students with severe disabilities. For them, the co-teaching model seemed to be working well and students with disabilities were full members of their classroom communities. A difference between students with mild/moderate disabilities and those with severe disabilities was observed at other schools. While the difference often exists, it can be in either direction. As will be seen, David is far more successfully included at Gleason school than are students with milder disabilities who are mainstreamed from the self-contained EMI/TMI classroom.

Hamilton Elementary

Donald, *a student with severe multiple disabilities*.

Donald is a young man who has cerebral palsy and an educational classification of SXI (severely multiply impaired). He has been included at Hamilton school for four years; before that, he had attended a "center program" for students with severe disabilities (SMI and SXI labels) run by his district and serving students from a number of neighboring districts as well. According to the paraprofessional aide who has supported him for the past three years, his parents are adamant that Donald be fully included and have fought hard against a reluctant district administration to make this happen. His first year was not very successful. The current aide states that the former aide was abusive to Donald and that his experience was generally very poor. Since then, however, his parents had succeeded in persuading the school to make a genuine effort and also to hire a new aide [Jeri]. After two years in Dennis's grade 4-5 looping classroom, it was decided to allow Donald to "repeat" a year so that he could have the benefit of another year with a supportive teacher, who by now knew him very well. A strong partnership had also been established between

Students read information that they will shortly discuss.

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Dennis and Jeri whereby Jeri, too, was a full member of the classroom community. This decision separated Donald from his former classmates, but also delayed for a year the transition to middle school, which promised to be difficult[13] and would effectively break up his social group in any case.

Donald has spastic quadriplegia, with very little intentional control over his body and limbs. He has some head control when properly positioned. He is an extrovert and enthusiastically responds to attention and engagement from peers and adults. His friendly expression and apparent eagerness to communicate serve as an invitation to engagement to anyone who is watching him. In addition, he uses vocalizations to get attention, particularly when he wants a turn during class discussions or simply is indicating agreement with what is being said.

Donald's cognitive abilities are largely unknown. Jeri says that his parents believe he has no cognitive impairments. School staff profess to share that belief or at least to keep an open mind. At the same time, however, there seemed to be little effort to offer Donald genuine academic programming. Instead, he was simply assisted in following along with whatever lessons his classmates were doing. During our observations, these follow-along periods rarely appeared to engage him. He did not look at the books and did not appear to attend to his aide's private instruction, the teacher's comments to the class, or the contributions made by his classmates. On the other hand, he did appear highly engaged during animated class discussions and social interactions of both large and small groups. At these times, his receptive language abilities appeared to be high.

> When I came in, kids were working on a social studies worksheet about [judicial] courts as a whole class. Sitting at desks arranged in three "tables" of 8-10 desks. Donald is parked at the end of the table closest the back corner of the room where his aide keeps her/his things. He has a worksheet on his lap and the aide is using marker pens to fill out the sheet. Donald is acting very sleepy and looking away from the class and teacher. When aide tries to engage him in task, he smiles and "wakes up," but does not look at the sheet. ....
>
> Beth [teacher filling in for Dennis] says that she has to go to another class. It looks like the aide is going to take over responsibility for the class as the students do their worksheets. While aide confers with Bonnie and kids all work on worksheets, Donald is left with nothing to do. He looks around for a while and then drops his head.
>
> Dennis [teacher] returns to the class, confers with Beth, and then both leave, leaving Jeri [paraprofessional aide] in charge. Class becomes noisier and Donald continues to have nothing to do. Eventually aide starts collecting materials for Donald to do his math. She gets same book and a clipboard. Donald appears pleased that he is getting attention. He does not show interest in the actual activity, however. As they get to work, the aide gets out a calculator with large buttons and display, but one that is flat (no raised buttons) and with a fairly dark display. (Can Donald see it? He is visually impaired, I believe.) She holds the book up and reads each problem to

[13] Many parents in this and other districts find that middle schools resist inclusive "placements" even when inclusion has been deemed highly successful in elementary school. Even when middle school, too, works successfully, the same problem can occur when it is time for transition to high school.

Donald. She asks Donald the answers and sometimes he vocalizes. She then talks through the calculations and writes down the answers. Donald is laughing a lot and quite engaged. However, I cannot tell whether he is processing the content or just pleased with all the motion and the interaction. His reaction of a lot of laughter indicates the latter to me, especially as I know this kind of motion makes my son [with somewhat similar disabilities] laugh, too. [I'm wondering whether any thought has been given to truly adapting the curriculum. Does Donald have academic goals in his IEP?]

Across many observational periods, it was difficult to find evidence that Donald was engaged with the curriculum content of the classroom. He seemed to go into "sleep mode" when the teacher talked for extended periods or when the class discussion was very academic. He also was not engaged when the aide took him through the motions of doing assignments, as when she talked aloud as she more or less completed his math assignments for him. On the other hand, Donald would instantly come to life when any gesture was made to include him in discussion:

Donald did not appear to be engaged in the discussion. Then they turned to an article about Egyptian artifacts and some food residue found in an archeological find. Dennis said to Donald, "Donald, we're talking about food." As soon as he was addressed directly, he smiled and reengaged. A peer came up and held his Reader where he could share it with Donald (held quite close). Donald, however, turned away and looked toward the girl who was reading the article aloud. (I don't know how good Donald's vision is.) When the peer started to give up and take back his Reader, Donald turned back to keep him from leaving.

Donald was an eager participant in class discussions where he seemed to understand the topic. On one day, we observed a discussion in which the topic was very well known to Donald: his father.

We walk in and the kids are all gathered in a total class discussion. Kids are all around Donald in the back. They are talking about doing an email with Donald's father who apparently is in the Upper Peninsula doing a movie with … an actor. The plan is that they will email his dad about the movie. They are asking questions and talking . . . Dennis says, "It is so exciting, Donald, that your father will keep us informed." He grins and smiles. .

Dennis comes over and explains that Donald is very close to his father, who is away for 3 months. He has been very sad, he explains. So they [Dennis and Jeri] came up with this idea this idea to engage the whole class in keeping contact with his dad to help him feel better. He is using it as an authentic communication and writing exercise.

The students in Donald's class clearly cared about him and many showed affection for him. At the same time, he did not seem to be an equal member of his class. The researchers had several discussions about whether Donald had "class pet" status or something more. On one hand, they did attend to him during class, expressed the belief that he was their friend, and

seemed eager for their turns as his buddy for the day. On the other hand, he was frequently left alone and isolated. On one occasion, Donald was observed with his class during a fire drill:

> A fire drill was in progress [when I arrived]. The school was just being evacuated. One of the first classes to leave the school was Dennis's, with Donald in the middle of the group with his aide, in his wheelchair. At the end of the drill, Donald got left behind. He and his aide walked alone back into the building. He appeared to have fallen behind when he had to detour to a curb cut and the rest of the class just went on [their "normal" route instead of following Donald's route].

Special education teacher leads small heterogeneous group discussion of key elements of a story.

On another occasion, Donald was observed when he went with his class to the computer lab:

> I followed Donald down to the computer lab -- actually, I took the stairs while Jeri, Donald, and three girls took the elevator. In the lab, the kids were mostly required to do Typing to Learn and I think in actuality all were working on that package, although some were playing typing games. One girl was supposed to be working with Donald. She parked Donald off to the side of her PC (at the end of a row) and started working on a typing test. Donald was clearly disengaged and she tried to move him closer but couldn't get him in a position where he could see the screen (as far as anyone could tell). Dennis came over and the girl said she really wanted to work on her typing and not work with Donald. Dennis was slightly annoyed, but assigned Donald to work with another girl at the end of another row. She seemed more interested and more able to meet Donald's needs, parking his chair much closer to the screen. Dennis told her to share the keyboard with Donald so he would "feel like" he was doing something. She put the keyboard in his lap and tried to get him to relax his arms enough that she could guide his hands/fingers to the keys. It quickly became clear that this wasn't working for Donald or for her, so she reverted to playing a game while he "watched."

While computers and assistive technology should open many opportunities for Donald, this was not happening at Hamilton. According to the aide, Jeri, Donald's parents had explored assistive technology options several years earlier, found nothing that seemed to meet his needs, and had shown no further interest. In addition, there was no one at the school who chose to educate himself about this issue, and certainly no one following new developments in a rapidly expanding field. Even so, the lack of accommodation for Donald in the computer lab (and with the classroom computers) was striking. There was no computer with its height adjusted so that Donald could get close enough to the screen to see it "well." (Donald has significant vision

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impairment.) There was no adaptive hardware and software to give Donald a chance to control the computer himself or in partnership with a classmate. Instead, the best Donald's classmates could do was position his wheelchair nearby and then try to show him and tell him what they were doing. This activity engaged no one and the helping students soon lost interest in the attempt. None of the adults involved, computer teacher, Dennis, Jeri, support staff, administration, seemed to find anything wrong in the situation described in the computer lab vignette.

In the end, Donald's membership in his classroom was almost entirely social. Students enjoyed helping him and making him seem happy. He probably had the capacity to cheer them up and make them feel appreciated, well beyond making them feel good as a recipient of their charity. Their interactions with him, however, often showed little respect for him as a peer who had his own sense of personal space. Most classmates did not attend to his signals, admittedly subtle, when he was unhappy with how he was being treated:

> When they come back, all the students gather around a bulletin board Jeri made about the election and the candidates. Jeri was leading the discussion based on what she had on the board, but Dennis really guided the students through discussion. Donald was in the midst of the students. Dennis and other students would turn his head to face forward when it fell (seemed liked they were pretty rough and disrespectful). One student spent time rubbing Derrick's head, giving him kisses on the head, as if a pet, not a person -- would they do that to other students? Another girl was putting a pencil in his hand and holding it.

Ned, *a student with autism.*

Ned is a young man with autism who is included in Shelley first grade classroom. He is supported by Randy, a paraprofessional who worked with him last year at another school. Shelley herself adopted a child with autism and some aspects of her teaching style probably reflect that experience. Her classroom is a very calm place, with relatively little visual distraction. She speaks quietly although she is a conscientious user of her FM amplification system, and makes frequent use of hand signs and gestures, sometimes together with words and sometimes without words. She uses signs almost exclusively for commentary and directions on classroom behavior.

Student with autism sits at wall with other children and paraprofessional talking about a learning activity.

Shelley pays considerable attention to building a genuine community of learners in her classroom. In general, she tends to find support staff disruptive when they come into her classroom or pull students out, although she agrees that sometimes the students do need support beyond what she can offer herself. She mentioned in a casual conversation that at one point in

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her career she had spent a summer taking special education classes, thinking that special education had some special techniques that would allow her to reach students with whom she was having trouble; she found that this was generally not the case.

Kids say it's time for snack. Shelley thanks them for the reminders, but says that Ned is out of the room and she would like to wait until everyone is in the room, then stop for snack. (Ned has been pulled out for Occupational Therapy.)

The OT comes to see Shelley, who asks, "Where do you go [when you pull Ned out]? Aide [who has been with Ned and the OT] says that Ned now has to leave again to "be assessed." Shelley shows her the "lesson that is being missed." The aide assures her she will catch Ned up later.

[Eventually the students have their snacks while Ned is still gone.]

After snack, kids go to the carpet area in the front of the room and one of the students comes to the front of the group to talk with the class and read a book about diabetes that he brought from home. [This student has brittle diabetes and has had several difficult episodes at school, as well as needing periodic testing and medication during the school day. His mother and Shelley have decided that the class needs to understand what it going on.]

Ned is sitting by himself with the aide [during the diabetes discussion] as he needs to have his snack – he came in late – but he is attending to the group.

This episode demonstrates both the disruptive quality of pull-out therapy and the lack of integration between the efforts of therapists and those of the classroom teacher when therapy takes place away from the classroom. Shelley showed similar frustration when a special educator came into her classroom to work with a student with reading disabilities. Even though the special educator was working in the classroom and was embedding his services in the context of a classroom activity, his teaching style was very different from Shelley's and he was setting different goals for the tasks and different standards for both process and product than she had been doing with the same student.

The speech and language pathologist, Kirby, and the school psychologist, Ruby, come to work with the class. They introduce themselves, Ruby saying that she is the "student assistance person." They explain that they will be coming every Thursday to work with the class. (This is a new attempt at push-in therapy being used in several classrooms where Kirby has students on her caseload and there is a need to work on social skills.)

Ruby has the kids carry chairs to make a circle. They will play "I love my neighbor" – kids groan [at the name of the game]. The game is then explained – students use categories … "I love my neighbor, especially the ones who …(are wearing blue shirts, etc.) One student is in the middle and others are seated in the circle. Everyone in the category gets up and has to switch seats. Middle person tried

to grab one of the seats. Whoever is left standing is "it" next. On the first round, Ned ends up stuck in the center, unable to grab a seat when other students are exchanging spots. Eventually, the aide intervenes and gets Ned out of the center.

Shelley is standing to the side, looking unhappy and disapproving. She says that she had no idea what Kirby and Ruby would be doing, and she is clearly worried that this is not going to end well for Ned. Kirby and Ruby are oblivious to Shelley's obvious distress and do not appear to be paying attention to what is happening with Ned.

The game goes on. Ned leaves the group. (too much stress? Commotion?) This whole games seems like a lost opportunity for good inclusion! Shelley watches Ned go into the bathroom. Kirby and Ruby seem unaware, but Shelley is concerned and unhappy (facial expression).

On her way out, Kirby says to the researcher, "Inclusion! Do we get a plus for that?"

This episode providing an interesting illustration of the problems of "parachuting" even an interesting activity into a classroom without consultation with the classroom teacher. Both Kirby and Ruby are caring and thorough professionals, and yet they have introduced an activity in which Ned was virtually doomed to failure. In fact, this kind of game seems problematic if one places a high value on inclusion because it would be a rare classroom that did not have one or two students who would be almost certain to "get stuck" the way Ned did. This problem was foreseeable with Ned, who, after all, was a primary target of the activity in the first place. It was striking that neither Kirby nor Ruby picked up on Shelley's body language during the activity – or, if they did pick up on it, they misinterpreted it but in any case did not ask for her participation or comments. It was even more striking that Kirby did not seem to feel that Ned's choice to entirely exclude himself from the activity cast any shadow over her "inclusive" lesson.

I see a group of four kids working in the hall [outside Shelley's room] with Kirby (SLP), including Ned and Brandon (boy with diabetes). The kids are working on a tree with leaves that say things to do when "I am calm, quiet, and thoughtful." Ned is partially engaged, making noises and moving a bit. Brandon is sitting with his arm around Ned. When Ned gets noisy, Brandon briefly puts his hand over Ned's mouth. It isn't clear whether Kirby notices. Kids than work on gluing leaves onto construction paper tree. Kirby tries to help Ned open the glue stick. Ned keeps saying that he can't and making "spaceship" noises. Kirby asks Ned if he wants to let Nissa do it. He ways yes and hands glue to Nissa. He settles down quite a bit. It seems like either he responds well to more control or he is relieved not to be doing this difficult/uninteresting task. Ned goes on and off task, cooperating with requests from Kirby but otherwise involved in spaceship noises and motions.

Shelley and Ned's aide, Randy, both report high levels of success in including Ned in classroom activities. During the hallway episode, however, neither of them was present, and the activity itself was more "academic" and probably less motivating than activities that Shelley

typically uses in her first grade classroom. As in the snapshot reported next, one becomes aware of the great and frequently neglected need to have collaboration among all those who work with students with even mildly challenging behavior and different learning modes/needs.

Followed Shelley's first grade class to music. Both Shelley and Ned's aide (Randy) accompanied the class to the room, but then left. On the walk to the room, Ned was toward the end of the line with about four kids behind him. Randy nudged him a couple of times to get going, but he seemed to be just part of the class.

The kids sat on the floor with the teacher in a chair at the front of the group. She told me that today would be "different" because they would be reading a story. (Randy rejoined the class part way through. She just sat at the back and worked on her notes. The teacher said that they were going to read a story, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, but listen to music with it. She said that the music would almost tell the story without the words because it used "themes." She then showed the kids a large picture of a bassoon and had them identify it. Several students made errors, and then Ned got it right…

Ned was seated at the front corner of the group, with Brandon behind him. As they started the story, the teacher held the book up in front of her so that the kids could see the pictures while they listened to a record. She had Brandon and Ned each move back a row to be able to see better. Except for Ned, the kids sat quite still and fully engaged throughout the story. Ned was also clearly interested, but kept moving up to be directly in front of the book. [The teacher told me later that he was also quietly repeating words from the story to himself.] As time went on, Ned became quite active, moving around, both in front of and away from the group. However, he frequently moved up to look at the book when the music started up or otherwise signaled something especially interesting. At one point, he did get up and run to the door. Randy did not immediately react, but watched. He did not leave the classroom and she helped him get back to the group.

After the book, the kids were asked to get up and form a large circle. The teacher then played what were obviously familiar tunes on the piano, to which the kids knew various steps: walk, run, skip, jump, etc. At first, Ned went off to the side of the room, but then he joined the circle and seemed to enjoy the activity. He did not always follow the same circle around the room as the rest of the class, but he stayed more or less with them and adjusted his gait to approximate the various gaits of the other students.

After the kids left, I did speak with the teacher for a few minutes. I asked her whether she knew what the classroom teacher does with respect to responding [or not] when Ned is inattentive, moving around, etc. She said that she did "not have a clue." She said that she tried not to do much unless Ned is making life difficult for other kids – then she asks him to stop… She said that she never knows what is normally done for individual students with special needs. In theory, if there were a para [paraprofessional aide], she would handle things, except that they generally try

to fade the aide, so this approach doesn't really work. [At a staff meeting after school, the school psychologist agreed that specials teachers need supports, but nothing is being done (yet). She acknowledged that special teachers are largely "out of the loop."

Meadowview

Meadowview is an inclusive school in the sense that it has not self-contained special education classrooms and seeks to provide all special education supports and services within the context of the general education classrooms. A wide variety of teaching styles and philosophies are present in the school, but several of the teachers are practitioners of "multilevel" teaching as described in this report. Meadowview exists, however, in the context of a district whose overall special education policies favor segregated special education for the vast majority of students with disabilities. Thus, students in the neighborhoods served by Meadowview but who have relatively severe disabilities tend to be educated elsewhere; their existence remains unknown to the Meadowview school community.

Kevin, *a student with mental retardation.*

One exception to this was a young man named Kevin who was observed for two years in Melanie's multiage, grade 3 through 5, classroom. Kevin attended Meadowview from first grade on, and entered Melanie's classroom with a TMI label (trainably mentally impaired). When Kevin had arrived in first grade, he could talk, but what he said often made no sense. He did not know his colors or letters, generally not displaying the typical indicators of "school readiness." By the time he arrived in Melanie's class for third grade, he could "write" as he knew his letters and some beginning sounds, but his "writing" consisted of long strings of letters, not separated (or separable) into words. He had basic addition and subtraction skills and understood how numbers work, but was well behind "third grade level." Like the other students described so far, Kevin was likable and did not have behavior problems that might have made inclusion more challenging. At the time when Kevin moved to grade three, there was discussion at the school of moving Kevin to a segregated TMI program in another building because there was concern that inclusion would become problematic as the general education curriculum became more "academic" in the upper elementary grades. However, Kevin's family was committed to inclusion, and Melanie was eager to have him as a member of her class.

Kevin did not have the support of a paraprofessional aide, nor did he need one in either the classroom he had attended for grades 1 and 2 or Melanie's classroom. Both teachers make extensive use of cooperative learning and natural supports; these, with a little assistance from an itinerant special educator, were sufficient to meet Kevin's special needs. Melanie describes the special educator as "old school" and not entirely comfortable with the atmosphere in the busy multiage, multilevel classroom. She provided Kevin with support mostly in math, where Melanie

was using highly flexible ability groups to address the wide range of math abilities in her classroom. Sally, the special educator, would take over Kevin's math group when she was in the classroom.

Melanie organized a formal circle of support to involve students in making sure that inclusive education worked well for Kevin. She started with a couple of students who were already established friends of Kevin and then added a few others, representing a broad range of abilities. Before taking any concrete action, Melanie asked Kevin whether he would like to have a group of students that would help him with schoolwork and he agreed that he would. She then gave him her list of proposed circle members and worked with him to adjust it until she had a small group of students that both she and Kevin felt would work well. Nominated students were then invited to join, and the group began meeting weekly over lunch.

Melanie launched the group with an adapted version of a MAPS (McGill Action Planning). Over time, the students talked about different ways to help Kevin and decided who would best help on any given day with any given subject. Students who were not members of the circle also continued to offer informal natural supports and the functioning of the circle was invisible. Circle members would step in when they saw a need, and Kevin also knew that he could always approach them if he needed them.

> The circle was meeting and the topic was helping Kevin with his spelling. After a little discussion of the kind of help that might be useful, Tiffany said that she thought she would be the best person to help Kevin. Tiffany is described by Melanie as "probably the next worst speller" in the class. When asked why she thought she was the best choice, Tiffany said that because she herself needed to do extra work on spelling, it made sense for her to spend the time working with Kevin on his spelling (in addition to time spent on her own spelling). The group agreed that Tiffany would start helping Kevin with his spelling on a regular basis.

Armstrong Primary

Wesley, *a student with serious emotional and behavioral challenges.*

The story of Wesley is incomplete, but demonstrates the kinds of supports and philosophies that come into play for a child with a severe emotional disability. Wesley came to Armstrong as a boy who was almost a "wild man".

> Bobbie (school principal) talked about Wesley, a student who has been having very serious problems with behavior. She said that she made a videotape and showed it to the child's physician, who said, "either you are crazy or a saint for keeping this kid." It has been very hard, given his behaviors. However, she and the support staff looked at the issues and decided that they had to try. They like Wesley and every now and then "see a child in there." "How could we not try to keep him?" asks Bobbie as we reflect on the fact that sending him to an EI ("emotionally impaired") program is likely setting him on the road to prison and even worse behavior.

Wesley's kindergarten teacher described him when he started school as "not seeming to want to be with other kids." He was very destructive, aggressive toward both children and adults, and had used very aggressive, "foul" language when he was upset. The video shown to his physician recorded an episode in which he had become aggressive, attacking his aide and shouting obscenities. The aide took him in a small quiet room (really a large storage closet) and he continued his behavior. She stepped out and closed the door – his angry screams could be heard just as clearly through the door, although eventually he did calm down and just cry.

On one observation day, the researchers arrived at Armstrong to discover that Wesley had "burned his house down" the day before. Although this initially sounded like another purely aggressive act, the more detailed story was that he had been dropped off by his school bus and found no one home. (He is only five years old and the driver should have waited to make sure someone let him into his house.) He went in and decided to cook himself lunch. In the process, the kitchen caught fire and by the time the fire department put out the fire, the house was no longer habitable. Further discussions between researchers and school staff provided more details of a very troubled home life.

Social service workers were trying to find temporary housing for Wesley and his mother, but there were no shelters available in their county, so this would mean moving to a different school and probably into the EI program school staff were trying to avoid. The support staff and principal devoted most of their school day to brainstorming solutions and thinking about alternatives for Wesley. They also tried to get a planned in-patient psychiatric evaluation for Wesley moved up so that he could get intensive psychiatric support immediately, and so school staff could better figure out what kind of actions would best meet his needs. They did manage to assist in coming up with a solution that kept Wesley at Armstrong and also to move the psychiatric evaluation up somewhat, although they could not make it immediate. In the interim, the support staff reworked their planning for Wesley:

> They have a new 'behavior plan' for Wesley where he is being asked to (1) respond to adult directions and (2) establish some sense of routine in which Wesley does not go off. Everyone told us that Wesley began not wanting to go to kindergarten class even before his house fire. His teacher said that Wesley had a hard time at first … No one seems to really have a sense of why Wesley has not wanted to be with other kids. They are focusing more on having him 'control' his behaviors. Wesley's mother was supposed to have come to the school yesterday but did not show. They were upset and concerned about this. Wesley is spending the day with the paraprofessional in a separate room where she does different activities with him, trying to get him to respond. They continue to be concerned that "he only wants to do what he wants to do" and that this has been even more so since the fire. The principal and the others are continuing to hope that the psychiatric evaluation will tell them a diagnosis so that they will "know what to do." The kindergarten teacher said several times that "we are not trained" to deal with Wesley…
>
> I continue to be impressed with the consistent commitment of all involved to this child who is, in the words of his teacher, a "very wonderful little boy."

Wesley is the most challenging student we observed with respect to inclusion in general education. It remains to be seen how Wesley's situation resolves, but there is no question that his

school is deeply committed to working with medical professionals, social service workers, and anyone else who can assist in trying to keep him in the Armstrong Primary School community.

Gleason

Gleason School is not a project school, but it is located only about five miles from Hamilton School. The school does not aspire to be an inclusive school, and its district also does not espouse an inclusive philosophy, although it does have a policy of trying to "give parents what they want. David's parents, one of who is a researcher on this project, moved David from a segregated center program in another district to his neighborhood school when he was almost six years old.

David ***A student with severe multiple disabilities.***

During David's first year at Gleason, he attended the center program in the morning and then traveled to kindergarten at Gleason School in the afternoon. The staff at Gleason School would have preferred to maintain this arrangement in subsequent years, but his parents insisted that he attend Gleason full time, with all necessary supports and services provided within the context of general education. This has been done for four years, with increasing success each year.

David's disabilities present a challenge to any educational setting in that he has significant physical disabilities, a vision impairment, and severe cognitive impairments. David is nonverbal, although by the end of grade four he had a repertoire of three signs and was beginning to use a picture communication system to a very limited degree. When he began at Gleason, he could not walk and required special seating for all activities. He took his first steps midway through the first year, and by the end of grade 4 he was walking independently throughout the school although he was just learning to manage steps on his own. For longer distances, he was also beginning to self-propel his wheelchair. All of his gross motor gains occurred first at school, where he seemed highly motivated to be able to do more things that his peers could do and where both professional staff and peers provided continuous encouragement.

In spite of the fact that unlike the other students in this study who attended schools with formal commitments to inclusion, David attended a school that had grave misgivings, David's inclusive program overall was the most successful observed by project staff. While there is little doubt that his parents' clear vision of what a successful program of supports might look like for him was key in defining David's program, there was also strong support from one of the school staff on David's IEP team, the speech and language pathologist. Although Elaine had never worked with a student with David's level of disability before, she was an experienced professional who was eager to try out many of the ideas she had seen at workshops and in the professional literature over her many years of experience. In addition, David started at Gleason School the same year that a new teacher arrived to take charge of a newly opened self-contained "EMI/TMI" classroom. This teacher, Kim, had previously worked at a center program for students with SXI and SMI labels for many years and was experienced with students with severe disabilities. Kim was designated as a teacher-consultant for David, and she proved to be helpful in designing ways to provide David genuine access to the curriculum and activities in his general education classrooms.

Occupational and physical therapy were provided to David (and some of the students in the self-contained classroom) by itinerant therapists[14]. Over time, the therapists became comfortable with a model of therapy that emphasized helping David participate in all school activities. While none of the therapists had prior experience with truly inclusive settings, the physical therapist, who stayed with David all the years he has been at Gleason School, has changed her practice. During the first years, she followed her familiar practice of pulling David out of class and working with him in a large hallway, using equipment she brought with her and took away with her at the end of her visit. During the last two years, she has primarily worked with David in the context of physical education classes, where she could also work with the paraprofessional aide and the teacher so that the same approaches could be used when she was not present. She also worked with David on the playground and when he was ambulating throughout the school.

As it happened, David had a different occupational therapist every year. Nonetheless, there has been a similar progression in the style of service delivery, probably at least in part because of the physical therapist's model and changing expectations on the part of the school principal and core IEP team members. During the last two years, the occupational therapists have focused on oral-motor skills by working with David at lunch, and with fine motor skills primarily in the context of art class. They also consult with the teacher and paraprofessional about adaptations and equipment in the classroom and other settings. For example, the occupational therapist has been instrumental in making sure that seating in the classroom meets David's needs and that his ability to use assistive technology, especially classroom computers, is maximized. The school has been providing various adaptive hardware, including a switch-adapted mouse and a touch screen, as well as both standard and specialized software (e.g., Intellikeys) to make use of computers within the classroom and to provide David as much access as possible to computers outside of school and in the future.

Like the other students except for Kevin, David has a paraprofessional aide to assist him throughout the day. Over his five years at Gleason School, he has had three different aides, all of whom have learned their job doing it. Most of the daily work of adapting and modifying curriculum falls to the aide, who has less direction from the classroom teacher than we would consider optimal. Only in kindergarten did the aide and teacher function together as a partnership. In that classroom, while the aide most often worked with a group that included David, it was not uncommon to find the aide working with another group while David was in the teacher's group, or even in a group operating more independently. Since that time, however, the aides have been more focused on David and have never had the level of classroom membership that Donald's aide, Jeri, had.

Particularly in grades three and four, the support staff and classroom teachers worked hard to find ways to help David be a fully participating member of his class. Efforts in third grade were fairly modest:

> The students have a long-term project of learning the shapes, names, and capitals of all the states in the United States. Part of this project involves short periods every day or two when the teacher puts up an outline map of a state on the overhead projector and asks a student to come up and identify the state and its capital. When

[14] In all cases, occupational and physical therapy were provided to students at project schools by professionals who move from school to school and have no membership in the school communities. In some cases, the therapists are employees of the school district; in others, they are employees of independent agencies that have contracts with the school district.

she determines that she will call on David, David works with a peer (and his aide) ahead of time to record the information for a given state on his Big Mac switch[15]. She would then call on David and his peer assistant would help him walk to the front of the room and help give the answer via the switch (if David needed such assistance). Although the content of this task was probably meaningless to David, he was clearly eager to participate and proud when he was successful.

By fourth grade, this kind of participation became much more sophisticated, and seemed to have more meaning for both David and his classmates.

The students were working on a large project for a science unit on insects. David's group was assigned the cricket, and all students first worked at home and at school to gather information about crickets. David's mother worked with him at home to locate information on the Internet, and he contributed several recipes for making edible dishes from crickets and closely related insects. (David's mother chose this topic because she wanted him to bring information his peers would find unusually interesting.)

In the next phase of the project, the students developed group reports that would be presented in a formal program with parents invited. David had an important role in the writing process. He had a vote on every item of information to be included, using his yes/no switch or signing "yes" or "no" for each choice. As his receptive language is variable, it was not always clear what criteria he was using to make his choices, but his opinions often appeared to be deeply held. Once the basic content had been identified, David also helped formulate the actual sentences, again by choosing between alternative methods of conveying the information using his yes/no switch and signs.

Finally, the students prepared the final presentation and presented it to classmates and parents. David participated by using a different communication device that allowed recording of a number of different messages, each represented by a different picture. He, his aide, and his fellow group members selected the sentences David would say, recorded them on the device, and found appropriate pictures to help cue David. On presentation day, one of the group members helped David use the communication device to deliver his portion of the report.

During much of the school day, David's work addresses his own IEP goals within the context of classroom activities. Sometimes the support staff or David's parents make suggestions about how best to do this, but the paraprofessional aide is responsible for the day-to-day details and implementation. In one of the more successful adaptations, a traditional class project where students made informational posters about the state of Michigan, David instead made a "Michigan counting book". Since David's goals included learning numbers and learning to handle book pages, this project addressed those directly. At the same time, his book included

[15] The Big Mac is a communication device made by AbleNet that allows one to record a short message on a recorder that looks like a large, round adaptive switch. When the switch is pressed, the message is played.

information about Michigan because each item counted was an item of significance in the economy or history of Michigan.

Severe Disabilities and Classroom Membership

It was clear in the case of Wesley that the staff at Armstrong felt Wesley's membership in the school community was of primary importance. In the other cases described, motivation for inclusion was also primarily membership in the school community although the concern originated with the parents rather than the school. The students described in this section had various levels of success with respect to classroom membership; at one end of the scale, the Evergreen students were unsuccessful enough that their parents removed them from the school and at the other, Kevin has genuine friends at school who also play with him outside of the school setting.

The "frames" describing the relationships between students with disabilities and their peers developed by Mary Fisher and her colleagues is very helpful in thinking about classroom community membership[16]. The lowest level is called "ghost/guest" and is associated with a student being excluded or treated as invisible. Nathan at Evergreen was clearly in this category, at least whenever the research team was observing. The other Evergreen students, Kelly and Cheryl, sometimes fell into this category, but more often fell into the next level, "Inclusion kid/different friend." This status is marked by differential treatment by other community members, but sometimes also with shows of affection and polite treatment. Donald at Hamilton also fell into this category some of the time.

More often, Donald fell into the next category, "I'll help," which is marked by helping and teacher-like treatment from peers. During the first year of observations, Cheryl at Evergreen also fell into this category much of the time, and David sometimes does, too. From our observations, these first three categories are closer together, followed by a leap to the fourth category, "Just another kid," which is marked by clear performance expectations and typical consequences. None of the Evergreen students made it to this category, and we suspect that this missing leap is what led their parents to give up on inclusive education. Donald did not either, but conversations with his father and school staff suggest that no one on his support team expected that much, so they were content with "I'll help." From observations and some conversation with Donald himself, however, it appeared to us that Donald would indeed have been far happier if he could have moved to "just another kid."[17] David's experience at Gleason, however, indicates that the expectation that a student with very severe multiple disabilities could still arrive at least at "just another kid" is entirely reasonable as this is the status which he enjoyed most of the time.

Only Kevin at Meadowview seemed to gain the higher-level frame of "regular friend." This level is marked by having peers to hang with, affection, being invited to parties, and generally

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[16] Fisher, M., Bernazzine, J.P., and Meyer, L.H. *Participatory Action Research: Supporting social relationships in the cooperative classroom*. In J.W. Putnam (ed), Celebrating Diversity In The Classroom: Cooperative learning and strategies for inclusion (2nd edition, p. 145). Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company, 1998; cited in Fisher, Mary. *Andre's Story: Frames of friendship*. In Grenot-Scheyer, Marquita, Fisher, Mary, and Staub, Debbie (eds). At the End of the Day: Lessons learned in inclusive education. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company, 2001.

[17] Donald has good receptive language skills and communicates responses well with eye movements and facial expressions. When asked whether he would like it if he had friends to be with, his face lit up and he showed vigorous agreement. Conversely, he often showed discomfort when his peers treated him more like a favored pet than a friend.

being involved in humor and fun. David seemed to skirt the edge of this category, but never found himself solidly in it for very long. We do not know if even Kevin had relationships that could be described at the highest level, "friends forever." He does, however, have long-term friends with whom he associates himself both at school and at home, and who choose to associate themselves with him.

Our observations of Ned at Hamilton and Wesley at Armstrong were too brief to apply the frames analysis with confidence. Both boys were younger than the other students described here, and had not been with their peers nearly as long. Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that neither moved beyond "inclusion kid" despite major efforts on their behalf by their teachers. Since both boys have disabilities that involve social behavior, it is perhaps not surprising that they had so much difficulty at the outset of their school careers. Indeed, except for Nathan at Evergreen, all of the others were described as extremely sociable and likable children. On the other hand, research elsewhere has demonstrated a great deal of success in moving students with autism into social situations that take them into higher categories on the scale used here. It seems likely that Ned, too, will move up as he matures, gains more social experience, his peers gain more experience with him, and specific interventions help him negotiate social relationships. Although we did not hold out much hope that a psychiatric diagnosis would bring the answers the Armstrong school staff were hoping for, if the school can find ways to continue to support Wesley, he too is likely to reach a point where he both wants and has genuine friends and classroom community membership.

WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

VI. 2 Empowering Citizens In A Democracy

The Whole Schooling framework focuses on two facets of democracy simultaneously. One root of the democracy principle lies firmly in the belief that the ultimate purpose of American public education is perpetuation and improvement of our constitutional democratic form of government through the preparation of future citizens. Tied to this is the Whole Schooling goal of creating an educational environment in which demographic and socioeconomic constraints do not create barriers either to learning in the short run or to membership in broader American society in the long run. This goal is rooted in a concern for "social justice."

KEY FINDINGS

Schools whose inclusive efforts are motivated primarily by social justice concerns tend to be more successful and resilient than those which view inclusion as a special education program.

Commitment to a democratic school environment creates healthy tensions in the effort to establish strong leadership while at the same time instilling personal empowerment in all members of the school community.

A wide variety of leadership and teaching styles can support schools and classrooms operating within the Whole Schooling framework.

Creation of a professional community climate where colleagues routinely confer about educational practices and beliefs is a major challenge.

Beyond an interest in valuing and capitalizing upon whatever diversity exists in a given school, Whole Schooling goes further in explicitly identifying disability as one of the key elements of diversity to be considered. Beyond working to include individuals with disabilities as full citizens of the school community, Whole Schooling also addresses the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)'s requirement that students have individualized educational plans designed collaboratively by teams that include educators, parents, other members of the community depending on specific circumstances of individual students, and the students themselves. Creation of such plans requires that a team of individuals, including representatives of a broad range of the school community, to work together to reach consensus. Finally, genuine inclusion of students with identified learning differences requires, on the one hand, that the existence of learning differences among all students be acknowledged and addressed, and, on the other, that students be empowered to support one another in their effort to learn together, as well as to make sure that their own educational needs are met.

We believe that efforts to create a fully inclusive school can only be truly successful if the process of school change creates a community where all of the Whole Schooling principles are followed. Within the Whole Schooling Research Project, the Whole Schooling framework was used by school leaders in various ways to promote school renewal, both with respect to defining the vision of an inclusive school and to providing a procedural roadmap.

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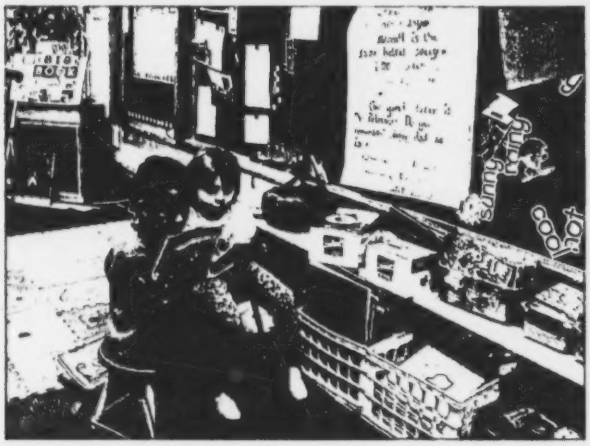
What Do We Mean By "Democracy"?

American society continues to struggle with tensions between a belief in individual rights and freedoms and the need to establish a system that supports the collective good. Nowhere are these tensions more obvious than in public schools. On the one hand, schools are seen as the primary medium for transmission of cultural and political values, hence the emphasis on character education, rules of conduct, and so forth. The current political emphasis on standardization of curriculum and testing to determine the level of attainment of those standards further emphasizes an underlying belief that schools have a mission to forward a collectively determined agenda. On the other hand, the notion of academic freedom has been stretched to the point where many educators (and others) believe that teachers should be free to do as they please within the confines of their classrooms, with virtually no outside "interference" and no responsibility to students or a larger school community beyond showing up (and probably maintaining some order and quiet in their classrooms).



Added to this tension is confusion about the democratic ideal for charting a collective course. Is it a simple matter of majority rule – dissenters must simply fall in line – or is the real goal reaching a consensus? If the goal is consensus, how can it be achieved? As a group, teachers have no special training in thinking about these matters. They often have little notion of strategies for conducting their own professional lives within a "democratic" context, and few experiences typically provided regarding how to prepare their students for life in a democratic society.

When we state a goal of preparing students to participate in a democracy, therefore, we are concerned far with far more than teaching them the mechanics of voting and otherwise determining "the will of the people." Basic respect for those who are "different" is critical, as is an understanding of the need for, and benefits of, agreed upon "values" or "rules of the game" such as those embodied in constitutions at all levels. At the same time, students must learn the value of making their own voices heard and gain skills for doing so. They must learn to evaluate what they hear from other voices in light of their own experience, the experience of history, and synthesis of the wealth of information and opinion to which they have access.

All of this is often summarized in the concepts of "critical thinking," "personal responsibility," and "respect," but those particular phrases are also used by many who do not share the basic mission of Whole Schooling. Indeed, "critical thinking" is often used to describe the process of parroting back a particular interpretation of information that is put forward by someone in authority (such as the author of a textbook or a teacher). "Personal responsibility" and "respect" often boil down to obeying authority figures. When interpreted narrowly, these elements of "character" can be used as the basis of virtually any educational philosophy implemented for any purpose. It is important, therefore, to keep the broader mission of Whole Schooling in mind when evaluating particular school initiatives or the observations of school

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activities. Observations of professional interactions and classroom processes within the Whole Schooling Research Project have made it clear that this is not a trivial issue.

Likewise, the kind of school community within which classrooms are embedded is democratic not only when all members have a voice, but also when certain guiding principles are adhered to by all. Too often, teachers and administrators who seek to be democratic believe either that majority rule is the only issue or that individual freedom is so important that the only restraints that can be put on community members are those that would be considered criminal in our legal system.

Many teachers and administrators believe that meeting the needs of all students within a classroom is a matter of teacher choice. If a teacher prefers to teach only to a segment of the students, perhaps those deemed "on grade level," that is a legitimate professional choice. Whole Schooling does not share this view. Instead, the underlying mission of educating all children, together, means that every member of the community has both rights and responsibilities that are not a matter of personal preference.

The democratic classroom is a classroom in which students have a voice in setting both long and short-term goals, in determining how those goals are to be achieved, and in evaluating the results of their efforts. They share responsibility both for their own learning and for that of their classmates. They share the responsibility with their teachers, the larger school community, their parents, and the broader community within which the school functions. Whole Schooling Research Project observation and interview data provide a wide range of approaches taken by teachers and students to share responsibility for generating goals and finding ways to achieve them, while still meeting goals imposed partly from the larger community.

A particular issue in classrooms, as in larger society, is discipline and shaping behavior so as to support, or at least not undermine, the central goals of the group. If one is committed to educating all students together and to developing a belief that difference is an asset, not a liability, then classroom management and discipline can become an important challenge. The positive behavioral supports initiative introduced in Michigan at the same time that the Whole Schooling Research Project began is entirely compatible with Whole Schooling. Indeed, the purest versions of that approach can be derived directly from the Five Principles and their supporting literature. However, teachers and school communities still struggle to implement this philosophy, which is radically different from that most of them experienced when they were in school, and is too often also new and counter-intuitive.

Democracy At The Building Level

Creating a school that implements the Whole Schooling philosophy is thus a challenging proposition, requiring strong leadership and commitment of time and energy from all members of the school community. As the project progressed, it became clear that a basic issue unresolved in all project schools was the definition of the school community itself. While virtually everyone talked about a "community" that included students, faculty and staff, and parents, there was little observable evidence that such communities existed and that school leadership sought to engage all of those potential constituents on an on-going basis, particularly the broader communities within which the schools are embedded (See Table VI.2-1).

Table VI.2-1: SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP			
School professional community	Administrative staff		All schools
	Office staff		None
	Regular classroom teaching staff		All
	"Specials" teachers		Avery, Hamilton
	Special education teachers (with and without own classrooms)		All?
	Paraprofessionals		Partial at Evergreen, none elsewhere
School professional community	Administrative staff		
	Ancillary staff	Associated with programs like "gifted", ESL, Title I	Partial?
		Therapists with on-going assignments within the building (full or part time)	None
	Building support services	Custodial staff, lunch room, etc.	None
	Professionals tangentially attached to school	Consultants from ISD or programs run at higher-than-district level	None
	Consultants brought in from all sources	Short-term tasks (usually)	None
	District-level support staff		None
	District-level administrative staff		Partial at Hamilton?
Adult non-employees	Parent volunteers	Involved on a regular basis	A very few parents at most schools, not included
	Community members	Involved on a regular basis	Meadowview, not included in planning
	Links to higher education	Student teachers	Partial?
		Involvement in pre-service education	None?
		Research projects	None?
		Critical friends	Hamilton, Buckley (partial)
Links to other schools in district	Faculty/staff linkages		Links to other schools in district
	Middle or high school students in elementary schools		Not observed
	High school students in middle schools		Not observed
	General education buildings and self-contained special education buildings		Not observed
	Public to private schools (in geographic district)		Not observed
Links to schools outside the district	Charter schools and schools in other districts	Staff networking	Hamilton, Meadowview, Evergreen, Armstrong
		Student contact	Planned only
		Internet projects	Meadowview, classroom basis only
Students	All enrolled students in the building		Partial to minimal at all schools

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This situation contradicts the clear finding of the US Department of Education's 1996 study of the role of leadership in sustaining school reform[1]:

> Effective reform leaders cultivate a broad definition of community and consider the contribution that every member can make to helping children meet challenging standards. They hear the voices of many stakeholders--families, businesses, and other groups and institutions. Their ability to develop plans that reflect the legitimate influence of others draws in many authentic partners, whose personal convictions as well as community spirit energize participation. They look for evidence of widespread participation in important aspects of change. Establishing partnerships and listening to a chorus of voices are leadership skills that permeate all aspects of reform.

Who belongs to the school community?

Building-level structures and activities can include a range of participants, from the full school community to very specific subsets of that community such as grade level teams or school improvement committees. The full set of Whole Schooling principles implies that the school community includes school staff, students, parents, and other members of the community who choose to involve themselves or who are required to do so by nature of their jobs. During the course of the Whole Schooling Research Project, however, we observed no formal activities or structures that acknowledged such a broad community and recorded no conversations aimed to involve the entire community.

Teachers in collaborative discussion regarding implementing inclusive education.

At best, the "school community" is construed by school staff to mean the set of individuals who are physically present in the school during all or almost all of the time that classes are in session. Even some individuals who fit this description are often excluded from community membership: office staff, custodial staff, lunchroom staff, people housed in the building but not "assigned" specifically to the building (e.g., the ESL district staff housed in offices at Hamilton), and often paraprofessional staff. Although these individuals may consider themselves part of the school community, the rest of the community often seemed oblivious of their existence except when they needed a specific service from them. This situation parallels the class-level situation observed in some schools where students with disabilities appeared to consider themselves members of their classroom communities, but where their classmates did not acknowledge such membership. (See the discussions of Cheryl and Nathan in the section on "Severe disabilities".)

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[1] Nadeau, Adel and Leighton, Mary S. *The Role of Leadership in Sustaining School Reform: Voices From the Field.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, July, 1996, Chapter 2.

Although students were sometimes deeply involved in planning and decision making at the classroom level, we attended no meetings at levels beyond the classroom where students were present and received no information about other meetings or activities where they were present or invited. (Student councils appear to be pro forma organizations whose sphere of operation extends only to the outermost fringes of communal life. For example, the council may be concerned with creating activities that seek to promote "school spirit" but that do not integrate with on-going school activities and do not necessarily follow any particular concept of what a "school with spirit" might even look like. Similarly, the council may be concerned with food sales, school fairs, and other activities that are not integrated with any larger vision of the school community.) Aside from formal meetings, there was also little or no evidence that students were considered genuine community members rather than as recipients of services.

Student codes of conduct and other formal rule definitions focus on "responsibilities" that involve various forms of doing what one is told, but are devoid of the kind of reciprocal responsibilities (and rights) that form the basis of genuine communities. It is not surprising, therefore, that even in Jennifer's fourth grade class at Hamilton, a class closer to many of the WS principles than most others in the study, student papers on what they would do if they ran the school focused almost entirely on what the students would not do: homework, various assignments deemed unpleasant, and so forth. Some students would simply close the school or devote it entirely to athletics. The closest any students came to constructive suggestions consistent with a "community" vision was increasing the amount of time available for free reading.

If students were routinely involved in discussing the shared values of the school, creating strategies for living those values, and evaluating the success of those strategies, one would expect essays that dealt more substantively with the management and culture of the school. At the very least, one would expect that arguments in favor of, say, increasing the time spent on athletics would make arguments that the increase would further school goals. None of the students wrote essays of this nature.

The role of parents was variable across the schools, but at no school were there signs that parents are routinely involved in the decisions and planning activities that shape the academic day. With a very few exceptions, parents are not physically present during the school day; Instead, the prevailing roles for parents were fourfold: "helpers", doing the bidding of paid staff; recipients of services projects determined by school staff (e.g., parenting classes); fundraising; and providing back-up tutoring and other academic assistance at home. This was true across the entire range of schools in the study, regardless of socioeconomic status of parents or school, and regardless of the racial or ethnic make-up of the school.

The core professional community.

At all of the schools, the core professional community consisted of the administrators and general education classroom teachers. The roles of the "specials" teachers (art, music, physical education, media, and so forth) varied with the school, the content area, and the individual personalities of the people involved. At one extreme of involvement, the art teacher at Avery functioned informally as the "lead teacher," taking a strong leadership role in bringing about school change by collaborating with both the principal and individual classroom teachers, as well as attending meetings and participating in joint projects. At the other extreme, specials teachers

at some schools did not routinely attend faculty meetings and did not collaborate with either administrators or classroom teachers.

With specific respect to students with disabilities, lack of true membership in the professional community by specials teachers is problematic. In most schools, specials teachers see all students with disabilities, whether they are included in general education classrooms for academics or not. At Hamilton, the specials teachers mentioned that for students who are "mainstreamed", they often see the students twice as frequently as other students: when they come to the specials class with their general education class and when they come again with their self-contained special education classroom. (They also noted that, in general, the special education students behaved more appropriately and got more out of the specials class when they attended with a general education class.) In addition, while classroom teachers typically have responsibility for an individual student for only one year and virtually never for more than two or three years, specials teachers often see the student regularly throughout his entire tenure at the school. Many IEP goals can be addressed in interesting and powerful ways in specials classes. Yet specials teachers are rarely involved in planning for students with disabilities and do not receive the supports afforded to regular classroom teachers. Exclusion of specials teachers from the professional community therefore has severe repercussions for both the "include all" principle and the "support learning" principle.

Parents and teachers talk together about teaching practices that foster inclusion.

The situation for special education teachers is similar to that of specials teachers in that it varied widely across and within schools. Conversations with the school principals made it clear that in all Whole Schooling Research Project schools, the administrator included the special education teachers as part of the professional community – this situation is not universally across the state. Indeed, in many other schools, special education teachers are not even sure whether their "boss" is the school principal or the district special education director. In a school attended by the son of one of the project researchers, a poster was put up at the entrance to the wing housing four self-contained special education classrooms at the request of parents. The poster contained photographs of all staff associated with the programs, together with their names and work assignments. Other teachers in the school commented that the poster was useful because they had "always wondered who those people were and what they did."

Paraprofessionals generally do not have membership in the school professional community, or even in the general school community. A partial exception existed at Evergreen, where staff had voted to use available funds to hire paraprofessional support staff for general education classrooms rather than using those funds for technology and other purposes. There, one hallway contained photographs of school staff, and the paraprofessionals were included in the photo gallery. They did not attend any of the faculty meetings observed by project staff, nor was a possible presence at other meetings mentioned by anyone.

At none of the schools were the other employees in Table VI.2-1 included in the school community: not at meetings, not in conversations with administration and classroom teaching staff, and not in any observations of classrooms or other school activities. Many of these employees did have strong interest and job responsibilities connected to the Whole Schooling project, but they were operating at the margins of the school community. For example, a conversation with the person at Hamilton who was assigned to handle technology matters revealed that he was both interested and knowledgeable about the issues of providing good sound quality throughout the school to benefit students with hearing or attention issues as well as to enhance the comfort of the facility for all people who used it. He talked for some time about his struggle to improve sound quality in the gymnasium, which was used for assemblies and school meetings as well as athletic events, and his concern that the needs of students whose IEPs required sound field amplification were not met outside the general education classrooms. He seemed to be operating relatively alone, however – he was never mentioned by any administrator or teacher, and he seemed to gain his own professional support from technology specialists working elsewhere. Similarly, the literature on inclusive education is full of examples of strong roles played by custodians, school secretaries, and other adult non-members of the professional community. In his book and presentations about the life of students with learning disabilities, Jonathan Mooney makes a strong case that for many such students, the school custodian is the most powerful positive influence in their school lives.[2]

By virtue of involvement in the research project, all the schools in the study did have a link to higher education, namely the Whole Schooling Research Project staff. Beyond that, Evergreen had a relationship with a special education faculty member at another university who provided staff development and administrative consulting concerning some aspects of inclusive education, apparently mostly curriculum modification and adaptation. Buckley also had independent relationships with faculty members in the areas of reading and ESL. However, the faculty members were not part of the school community, except to a partial degree at Hamilton where Whole Schooling Research Project staff attended many faculty meetings and met formally and informally with staff members until casual, on-going collaboration began to define the relationship.

Leadership and the Mechanics of School Change

Given the actual situation in project schools, our discussion of building level leadership will focus almost entirely on the interactions of full-time professional staff members. The methodology used to identify schools for inclusion in the Whole Schooling Research Project meant that in all schools the principals saw themselves as leaders committed to creating or maintaining schools that were consistent with the Whole Schooling Principles. They all saw leadership in this area as one of their primary responsibilities. Three of the principles (Hamilton, Armstrong, and Buckley) took their positions with the understanding that their job was creation of an inclusive school. This did not mean they had substantial higher-level support, however. The Valley View and Detroit school districts both had long histories of very segregated education for students with disabilities and district-level special education leadership that did not support an inclusive vision for Hamilton and Buckley. The Hamilton principal told us that in the

[2] Mooney, Jonathan and Coles, David. Learning Outside the Lines: Two Ivy League students with learning disabilities and ADHD give you the tools for academic success and educational revolution. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

beginning she thought of her school as "its own school district" because she could not mesh her vision of an inclusive school with prevailing district policies and procedures. As she became successful, and as a relatively new superintendent gained strength and the long-time special education director retired, the district changed until this principal became an assistant superintendent at the close of the project. Buckley is part of a huge and very troubled urban district, but it does have higher-level administrative support in an Executive Director who oversees a group of ten schools that includes Buckley. Beyond that, however, Buckley continues to struggle in a district that is in major financially and pedagogical difficulty.

Only two schools enjoyed clear support for their inclusive efforts from the district special education department. The special education director working with Rogers High School has pursued Whole Schooling in her doctoral studies and is making an effort to change very traditional thinking district-wide. One of the co-principals at Evergreen is also the district's special education director. Although the principal at Armstrong also has district-level support for her K-3 primary school, students leave for an upper elementary school that does not share the inclusive philosophy. The principals at Avery and Meadowview seemed to be following personal inclinations in their efforts to create inclusive schools, sometimes finding support elsewhere in the district, more often finding barriers, and in practical terms often following the Hamilton "model" of seeing the school as its own district.

Principal and teacher leader together draw an image on an inclusive school in a professional development seminar of the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling

In all cases, the goal of creating an inclusive school that was at least loosely compatible with all of the Whole Schooling principles was not articulated in a clear, formal vision statement. In no case was there a clear, community-wide mandate for change. At the same time, principals attracted to the Whole Schooling framework shared a belief that change cannot be imposed from "the top" but must somehow grow up from the roots. That is, that the teachers would have to be the ones to embrace the Whole Schooling principles and then work together to put them into practice.

Observations of school meetings and interviews with administrators and teachers made it clear that however correct this belief might be, it presents significant challenges to formal efforts to bring about institutional change. This was confounded by the fact that none of the principals had deeply developed visions of what their schools would look like once the change effort was complete, or even well underway. The data suggest two reasons for this:

- Lack of models: there are very few fully inclusive schools in the United States and none that were easily accessible for the principals or other school staff. Principals are therefore inventing their visions, drawing bits and pieces from all aspects of their experience.
- Unwillingness to articulate a vision for fear that teachers would see it as a mandate and react defensively.

Even when addressing less radical change than fully inclusive schooling, school leaders are often in the position of creating the vision as they go:

> One irony that participants mentioned often concerned the fundamental ambiguity of some aspects of change. Said one, "As visionaries, we don't know what it's going to look like in the end." To go where no one has gone before is ultimately to be surprised in one way or another, no matter how well you have done your homework. As much as they know that schools need some kind of stability to get from one day, month, and year to the next, leaders who are successful change agents are ruefully conscious that they cannot predict where they will end up.[3]

Rather than painting a detailed picture of what the school "should" be like, school leaders must instead articulate a coherent set of beliefs, create a school community that shares those beliefs, and then work with all members of the community to create a system of practices that embodies those beliefs.

The formal mission statements of project schools do not differentiate them from schools which have no commitment whatsoever to inclusive education or other Whole Schooling principles. The Evergreen mission statement is typical:

> *We, the Elementary Staff of Nantucket Community Schools believe that all students can learn. We are committed to providing our students with a positive learning environment designed to foster academic and social growth, individual achievement will be measured through formal and informal assessment. We accept the responsibility to educate our students to become productive learners and contributing members of our school community.*

Hamilton's goes a little further, but still does not take the plunge and make a specific commitment to the belief system outlined in the Whole Schooling framework:

> *We believe that all students can learn and that learning is enhanced by a combined effort of school, family and community. Students learn best in an environment which integrates curriculum, is developmentally appropriate, and addresses diverse intelligences, learning styles and interests. Students will develop respect for self and others and become cooperative, contributing citizens of a technological society.*

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any educator who would not offer whole-hearted agreement with the Evergreen mission statement, even if he favored schools run with military-style discipline, lock-step instruction offered to students grouped rigidly by ability, and a curriculum tied entirely to abstract, "textbook learning". One can infer a little more from the Hamilton statement, with explicit references to partnership with family and community, developmentally appropriate curriculum, and diverse student learners, but it would still be embraced by educators who believe that students with disabilities "belong" elsewhere or who see economic and social inequalities merely as realities to be accepted rather than as dimensions of diversity whose negative consequences may well be avoidable.

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[3] Nadeau, Adel and Leighton, Mary S. *Visions and Values section.*

Indeed, in the many meetings project staff attended where teachers and administrators talked about their goals and beliefs, they were couched in general terms and colleagues did not challenge each other to clarify their meanings or to make sure that there was genuine consensus with respect to core belief rather than just choice of words. Some individual teachers at every project school were strong innovators who demonstrated their beliefs by example, but with a very few exceptions, they were unwilling or even unable to articulate their beliefs and how those beliefs shaped their classroom practice. There was little or no opportunity for other teachers to infer the beliefs by observing these classrooms because no opportunities for visiting each other's classrooms typically arose at any of the schools.

One result of participation in the Whole Schooling Research Project was creation of the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling (MiNIS). At the meetings, which led to the network's formation, participating teachers talked about the need to see what other teachers do, but also the difficulty of sharing beliefs and practices in one's own school. They said it was very difficult to talk to colleagues at one's own school about classroom practice and beliefs because the social system did not really allow it. The idea of a network was appealing because it was far more comfortable to be reflective and analytical when talking to teachers who work at different schools. Likewise, they felt far more comfortable observing in a classroom across town, or even across the state, than in a classroom across the hall.

Teachers sharing at initial formation meeting of the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling.

Several of the project principals, specifically those at Hamilton, Armstrong, and Buckley took leadership roles in forming MiNIS. The principal at Meadowview was also a strong supporter, although less personally involved. Avery came to the project late and was so financially stressed that participation was very difficult, although the principal and several teachers endorsed the idea. Of the project elementary schools, only Evergreen chose to stay away from any involvement with the network, probably for the reasons described elsewhere. Because it was the only high school that remained in the study for the full project period, Rogers has not participated in Network activities to date; so far, all Network meetings and activities have focused on elementary school issues.

Creation of the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling was a valuable step in building a professional climate in which individual teachers and other members of the school community can begin to look at the details of educational practice and how they support or work against the shared beliefs of those professionals. In the initial organizing meetings, teachers spoke about how much easier it is to share beliefs and methods with counterparts at other schools, and also about the value of visiting back and forth to observe different approaches to inclusive teaching. Through contacts made in the Network and also the multilevel teaching group that was formed later and has an overlapping membership, relationships across schools have continued to develop. Recently, those relationships have deepened to the point where participating teachers

have begun to talk very honestly about their own core beliefs, their ease or difficulty of making various changes in teaching approach, and specific concerns they have about their current classroom situations. The group has reached a point where there can be collective reflection and brainstorming, clearly energizing the participants and presumably leading to continued development of genuine Whole Schooling classrooms. Additionally, both the MiNIS network and the multilevel teaching group now included active members from several schools that were not members of the Whole Schooling Research Project itself. So far, these "new " members are from the district where Hamilton is located at where Hamilton's former principal is now a district-level administrator. In addition, a few members of the teaching group are teachers who have long been associated with the Whole Schooling Consortium itself but do not teach in project schools.

The approach of creating cross-school networks has been invaluable to the school renewal process, yet it also points out two concerns. First, it took a very long time to build relationships of sufficient trust to allow teachers to speak frankly and to offer and receive constructive criticism or participate in reflective discussions. A key role for a school leader would therefore seem to be to work constantly to nurture a school climate where this kind of openness and trust can exist on an on-going basis among faculty and staff at one school. It may well be that teachers who participate in the cross-school network will take their new approaches and begin to help build a genuine community of professional collaboration within their own schools. Indeed, this may be a very effective way to accomplish such a goal; such an outcome remains to be observed. However, the relative high cost and slow progress[4] of such efforts leaves us looking for other avenues to accomplish this same goal, perhaps in addition to the cross-school networking or sometimes in place of it.

Participation in a genuine collaborative teaching community is described as "professionalism" by Nadeau and Leighton:

> Professionalization of the school culture was key. Older teachers did not think much about practice [in our school]. Seasoned practitioners may well have settled into a set of routines that made some sense under the old regime and dealt effectively with idiosyncrasies of that system. It may sometimes be harder to win their cooperation for change. Many participants viewed mentoring and peer coaching as essential ingredients of reform. They described the importance of intellectual honesty and mutual respect. Faculty meetings, drop-in visits, and even hallway encounters became venues for discussion of the value of ideas and strategies and the results of experimentation.

Likewise, in their book on professional teacher communities in high schools, McLaughlin and Talbert[5] conclude that the principals who are successful in creating teacher communities that bring about effective school-wide change stress creation of school cultures where collaboration, sharing of resources and knowledge, and willingness to be publicly reflective. Both of these descriptions of professional behavior describe bringing the accomplishments of the Michigan

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[4] The costs of cross-school networking are both financial (providing release time for teachers to engage in planning and in visiting) and educational (when substitutes have to take over participating teachers' classrooms). Because both of these costs must be controlled, progress in network-building remains slow.

[5] McLaughlin, Milbrey W. and Talbert, Joan E. Professional Communities and the Work of High School Teaching. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Network for Inclusive Schooling and the Multilevel Teaching Group inside a single school. Creating such a professional community inside the school is the most critical accomplishment for school leaders seeking to create a truly inclusive school.

McLaughlin and Talbert contrast two leadership styles that were observed within the study. Within one leadership model, the principal sees his role as promoting the development of teachers as individuals; within the other, the principal is more concerned with the professional faculty as a group. The former style is exemplified in the McLaughlin and Talbert study by a principal who says: "My main role is to work with teachers to make them as productive as possible. And to make them feel good about coming to work every day. " His strategy for accomplishing this is focused on individual teachers:

> I do a lot of walk-throughs and acknowledge things that are going on that are really good. Little Notices. Also just verbally telling them. They like the typed notes better than the handwritten. It looks like you are being more official. And then the other part is, if you have a good idea, you come to me, and if I've got scrounge the money from somewhere, if it's a good idea, I'll say, 'Well, let's do it. We'll figure out how to get it done[6].

In contrast, another principal has a collective view of the school community and his role within it:

> I see myself as the person who is ultimately responsible to see to it that everything that goes on at this school comes together in a way that's positive, and that the parent community, students, faculty, and staff work together to achieve our goals and objectives[7].

The authors describe this principal's approach as working to "make the uncertainties associated with changed student needs, academic background, and social circumstances into occasions for faculty problem-solving and educational intervention. To this end, he devised a number of cross-cutting, integrating strategies, such as committee structures, school-wide planning groups, and annual faculty retreats, to create opportunities for ongoing discussion and, in the process, build a sense of community responsibility and engagement. He also initiated the Program Improvement Council, comprising students, teachers, parents, and community people."

Although this principal's efforts were still underway at the time of the study, McLaughlin and Milbrey could already report significant positive changes at the school, particularly within a single departments which was emerging as a model for the rest of the school to emulate. This principal was able to support a group of more innovative teachers in a way that avoided the tendency of such a group to be marginalized by those who favor the status quo and to be seen as a positive model for everyone else. Indeed, overall a primary result of this principal's leadership style was "dispersal of leadership" so that informal leaders developed throughout the school community, included not only faculty but also other staff and parents. The principal who emphasized encouragement of individual teachers alone did not accomplish a significant level of school-wide change.

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[6] McLaughlin & Talbert, page 104.
[7] McLaughlin & Talbert, page 101.

All of the principals in the intensive study schools fell somewhere between these two versions of school leadership. None exerted as powerful an influence on school culture as that described by McLaughlin and Talbert, but all saw their roles as more than simple support of individual teachers. All of the principals sought to create a shared sense of mission, but all were confounded to some extent by the need to help such a vision evolve from the school community rather than attempt to impose it from "the top." In addition, all of the principals were still defining the notion of an inclusive school even for themselves.

Patterns of leadership at the various schools varied with respect to the degree to which formal leadership was dispersed. One school had two co-principals; one had an administrative structure that included the position of "teacher leader," an individual selected by the school faculty to take on a full-time administrative role. Another school had an informal teacher-leader, a teacher who had acknowledged leader status within the school professional community, but no special title and no release from normal teaching responsibilities. At still another school, the principal relied primarily on support staff rather than classroom teachers to collaborate about the development and implementation of the school mission. In the remaining schools, dispersed leadership was less clearly structured. Groups of dedicated staff members often worked together for short or long periods of time, and sometimes gained strong administrative support but other times not.

Evergreen had co-principals whose division of labor was not absolute: one was also the district special education director and took primary responsibility for issues that directly affected students with IEPs. The other concerned herself more with general classroom practice and her own strong commitment to alternative grouping of students, namely multiage classrooms in lower elementary grades and looping classrooms in upper elementary grades. In most discussions with staff members and at most meetings researchers were invited to attend, the "special education" principal was dominant. Indeed, conversations with special education staff often made no mention whatsoever of a second principal at the school. However, researchers had the definite impression that with respect to the day-to-day operation of the school and the curriculum alignment process that was consuming most school-wide collaborative effort, the "general education" principal was the primary leader[8].

The two co-principals seemed to work well together and the partnership appeared to allow a more conscious formulation of school mission than emerged at some of the other project schools. At the same time, however, the domination of inclusive education (with respect to students with disability labels) by someone who was also the special education director in a district whose other schools were not inclusive put the "include all" component of Whole Schooling more into the category of a special education program than a pervasive philosophy. When, at the end of the project period, three of the students with severe disabilities had been withdrawn by their parents in favor of segregated settings, the "special education" principal seemed quite content to simply conclude that these students "needed" a different placement. There was, so far as we could tell, no effort to examine what had been done to see whether anything could be done differently in the future. Since all three were withdrawn because their parents felt the students were not genuine members of the classroom and school communities, their leaving should have generated some discussion about the school's mission and what could be done to make it "work" for the most challenging students. This simply did not occur.

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[8] The distinction between "special education" and "general education" principal was never made by anyone within the Evergreen community and the terms are used here only to distinguish between the two overlapping spheres of interest and responsibility.

Hamilton was the school with the formal position of "teacher leader" in its administrative structure. During the years in which formal data collection was taking place, the teacher leader seemed to function in a traditional role of assistant principal as disciplinarian, spending most of his time involved in mediating difficulties of individual students and occasionally also working with individual teachers. The year after the project ended, both the principalship and the teacher-leader positions changed hands. A new principal was installed when the former principal moved to district-level administration, and a new teacher-leader was elected. These two individuals work very closely as a genuine team; both compatible personal styles and the fact that both are new in their roles help create a true partnership.

Both Evergreen and Hamilton are relatively large schools with 500-600 students. Avery is far smaller, with only a few more classrooms than grade levels. Here there is no funding available for two official school leaders, but a strong partnership exists between the principal and the art teacher. Avery is a magnet school whose mission is to infuse the arts throughout the curriculum, so it is not surprising that the art teacher plays a pivotal role. The art teacher herself told us that her role at this school was vastly different, and vastly more rewarding, than the role she had filled as a mere "specials teacher" at other schools in the past. Long-time faculty members said, however, that it was not just the formal mission of the school but the vision and energy of this particular teacher that made the difference: the school had not experienced the same kind of leadership team before the current art teacher arrived at the school.

Indeed, the art teacher did concern herself with the formal mission of the school, working hard to infuse the arts into all aspects of the school curriculum. She described her involvement in the math curriculum as the area where she felt the most success in taking art into the regular classroom, but her own efforts in the art room reflected involvement in all content areas. Her leadership, however, extended far beyond anything tied directly to an arts emphasis, no matter how broadly defined. Two clear examples were observed during the one year in which Avery participated as a project school in the study:

- Schoolwide "book clubs" were established for all grade five students. The art teacher, the principal, and the grade level teachers worked together to create these clubs, which involved all grade five students and met weekly during the staff lunch hour. These clubs were the brainchild of the art teacher, with strong support from the principal, but also required a strong collaborative effort and willingness of all the participating teachers to give up their break time for both planning and actually meeting with the clubs.

- The art teacher used personal connections to get a very large number of computers donated to the school. During the project, she was occupied with getting the equipment up and running, and with getting useful software to allow the computers to genuinely complement on-going classroom activities. In addition, she was in the brainstorming phase of designing a program where students at the school would use the computers to being to learn economics and finance. At the end of the Whole Schooling Research Project, she was refining a plan where she would get community members to donate seed money, "at least $2,000 but preferably $10,000" that students would collectively invest in financial markets and then track and manage via their computers. This project was intended primarily to teach the young, inner-city students about the world of finance, but also to raise money for the impoverished school.

The division of labor in this school was one where the principal established an overall school climate and handled the complicated paperwork involved in a large, urban school system. The teacher-leader's were more project-based, but also helped shape the growth of a school mission that indeed turned out to be consistent with all of the Whole Schooling principles. Beyond her role as a manager, the principal was particularly involved with building school community, increasing parent involvement, and becoming more inclusive with respect to disabilities.

Armstrong Primary School was a rural school with a close-knit faculty and staff and an extraordinarily caring environment. The school had been established as an inclusive school and the principal had had more freedom than is often available to choose the staff. This undoubtedly was an initial factor in creating the comfortable professional community of the school, but maintaining such a community required continuing leadership. At Armstrong, the support staff (social worker, speech therapist, special education teacher) worked not only with each other but also with the principal to build a coherent school community. Support staff felt that their role, which involved a great deal of co-teaching, allowed them to keep classrooms connected as they moved from one to the other. In a sense, they provided the string out of which the school community network was built. Because they spent their time in general education classrooms, their knowledge of the general curriculum and of the entire student body was far greater than is typical in schools where support staff have their own resource rooms or support students through pull-out and pull-aside practices.

Specialists discuss needs of children and support for teachers.

Beyond helping to connect all of the classrooms and teachers, the support staff formed the core of a crisis team that is described in detail in the "support students" section of this report. The crisis team performed a leadership role in addition to a support role both by modeling positive behavioral support techniques even under crisis conditions and by making it possible for teachers to risk including students who had a clear potential for becoming disruptive or even violent.

Meadowview and Buckley Elementary Schools both had relatively tradition leadership structures, even though both had some very untraditional staff members and administrators. In both cases, teacher-leaders emerged from the school staff primarily by virtue of their own interests and skills. Other staff members remain relatively free to work with these informal leaders or not, depending on personal preference. Both schools were going through administrative changes during and after the research project; these kinds of informal leadership systems appear to be quite resilient during times of stress on the overall school community.

A central task for any school leader attempting to bring about significant change is inculcating a shared vision or value system within the school community. In order to create a community where Whole Schooling can become framework for both change and on-going practice, the vision or value system must address all of the issues outlined in Table 2.

In all of the schools, the issue of creating a genuinely inclusive community was addressed by the school leader(s), but to varying degrees. With respect to students with disabilities, the

commitment was strongest at Armstrong, Hamilton and Evergreen, where students with a wide range of disabilities were indeed being included in general education classrooms. There was a striking difference between schools, however. At Evergreen, inclusive education was viewed as an option on "the continuum" of means for providing special education services to students. While most teachers and staff seemed to believe that it might be the best option for *some* students across the entire disability spectrum, it was nonetheless seen as a special education program rather than an educational philosophy that extended to all members of the school community.

Table VI.2-2: Issues to Be Addressed in Building a Vision for the School

Inclusion	Disability, giftedness, ESL, at-risk, racial/ethnic diversity, etc.	Some aspects on the table at all schools
School community	Membership Structure and supports	Not formally addressed, except perhaps at Evergreen
Professional collaboration	Ongoing, draw on all resources	Varying models, not addressed as in issue in itself
Parent involvement	Numbers of parents Type of involvement	Minimal attention
Student empowerment	Domains Support for	Minimal attention
Outside constraints	State mandates District policies Community goals/values Fiscal realities Accountability (all levels)	Addressed to varying degrees at all schools, except for community goals/values

At Hamilton, there was a growing belief among some members of the school's professional community that inclusive education was a matter of social justice rather than special education. Thus, while teachers were beginning to believe that the students with disabilities would receive the best educations when well-supported in general education classrooms, they also were coming to the conclusion that including the students benefited the entire school community. We suspect that the difference between the two schools is in part attributable to a difference in the belief systems of the schools' principals. While Evergreen's principal was also the district special education director and deeply steeped in the notion of "special," Hamilton's principal was a general educator concerned with building a caring community that served all of its members well. Thus, our impression was that Evergreen's principal focused on details of methods and practice, while Hamilton's was far more concerned with creating a broad shared value system.

The school leaders at Buckley, Hamilton, and Evergreen all made extensive use of formal meetings to explore options and concerns, and to build a shared vision for their schools' futures. While Armstrong, Avery, and Meadowview also had faculty meetings for this purpose, meetings seemed to be a less central method for bringing about change. At these schools, the principals leaned more toward leading by example and to working through other professionals to bring about consensus.

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The small size of her school probably made leadership by example easier for the principal of Avery than it would be at any other school, but her powerful presence was undoubtedly unusual even for a small school. Sharon was involved in all aspects of the school's operations on a daily basis, filling in or assisting in classrooms, taking on responsibilities such as a fifth grade book club, planning and participating in many events that brought parents into the school during and after normal school hours, and generally creating an environment where every student was highly valued.

One of the most striking characteristics of Avery was the presence of many plants, both inside and outside the building. An avid gardener, Sharon uses gardening in many ways within the school. A few years ago, grant money was obtained to create a butterfly garden near the school's entrance. Although the garden had fallen into some disrepair, it continued to have many flowers and, we were told, to attract many butterflies. Inside the building, potted plants were everywhere. Sharon used care of these plants as a calming activity for students with patterns of behavior problems as well as with students who were merely having a bad day or needed some special attention. Students referred to her for discipline were often immediately set to work on a plant-related activity, and almost any time one visits the school one will observe a student or two attending to the plants. Although a technique like this is open to abuse, as when a student spends all day tending plants and little time engaged with the general curriculum, we did not observe such excess at Avery. Instead, the plants seemed to function as a "positive behavioral support," providing a way for students to take a time out, to engage in a calming activity, and to do something where they could feel success and pride. They also created a strong bond between the principal, who clearly loved both her plants and her students, and students, including many who in other settings might have had very adversarial relationships with the school principal.

Aside from the plants, the shared spaces at Avery contained many other items that helped demonstrate the adults' pride in student accomplishments and a desire to bring the outside community into the school. A visitor to the school's eyes are immediately drawn to a collection of imaginatively painted and decorated wooden chairs, which are a permanent part of the school décor (and not to be sat on). These chairs represent a large art project undertaken a few years ago; their presence in the hallway not only showcases student work but also defines the school's focus on the arts and also immediately gets one's imagination going. Aside from the usual student artwork adorning the walls of the hallways, there are also mobile displays intended primarily for visiting parents that display current work, often tied to a family activity.

Bobbie, the principal at Armstrong, also presents a very strong example to the staff although the physical appearance of the school is very different. She does not hesitate to share strong concerns with community members and efforts she makes at problem solving are not hidden from view. Her method of thinking and feeling aloud provides a model and, perhaps, an inspiration to other members of the school community.

All of the schools rely on innovative teachers to bring about change, but to varying degrees. In some cases, it seems entirely up to individual teachers whether they take notice of work done

by others, and equally a matter of personal preference whether innovative teachers choose to share their ideas with their colleagues. In other cases, there is a deliberate attempt by the school leaders to bring such teachers to the attention of others, to encourage them to collaborate, and to encourage others to take notice. As in the case of structuring meetings to arrive at a preplanned outcome, developing teacher leaders is a tricky business. In an atmosphere where teachers do not routinely visit each other's classrooms, talk about either the details of their practice or their underlying goals and beliefs, nor meet together to examine practices and beliefs developed elsewhere, it is difficult to capitalize on the potential of innovative teachers to become teacher-leaders.

All of the schools had this problem to a significant degree. Indeed, in many cases, innovative teachers operated almost in secrecy, even when they had professed administrative support. To some degree, this appeared to be a teacher preference – the innovative teacher wanted to feel special and different, and therefore was not inclined to make it easy for others to borrow ideas and methods. In virtually every case, such teachers talked about the enormous amount of work it took to maintain their innovative classrooms. While they implied that others might simply not want to do that much work, we also suspect that they were not eager to give away the fruits of the work so that others could have a "short cut" to achieving similar outcomes. A more practical consideration is that just like Sharon's gardening, the innovative teachers' practices were very closely tied to personal interests and beliefs. Thus, sharing those practices may well be something they feel cannot be effectively done, or that can be effective only as a result of a major invasion of personal privacy.

As we said earlier, the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling has proved to be an avenue for getting around some of the difficulties in leadership by innovative teachers. Indeed, when an innovative teacher talks about his or her practices at a network meeting, colleagues at the home school seem to feel pride, whereas the same talk "at home" might engender resentment or rivalry. A second approach was used at Armstrong, where support staff moving from room to room saw it as part of their responsibility to "spread the word" and keep teachers informed about successful innovations in other classrooms. Although less widespread, the co-teaching model in place at Evergreen may also accomplish this goal to a more limited extent. There, co-teacher partnerships operate by the half-day, with a co-teacher assigned to one classroom in the morning and another in the afternoon. All of the special educator co-teachers share office space in a single room. Thus, there is some opportunity for word to spread among the special educators and then, perhaps, out to other classroom teachers. No one spoke about this, however, and its effects were certainly slower and subtler than at Armstrong. Nonetheless, it is likely that part of the reason that of two innovative teachers, Steve and Tina, the one with a co-teacher was the one whose ideas were more likely to be picked up by colleagues.[9]

In a setting where members of the professional community do not really know what each other are doing, nor what they are trying to do, it is enormously difficult to build a shared vision or a consensus about how the school community "should" operate. Even though the ultimate goal may well be to change the practices of individual teachers in individual classrooms, school leaders were all searching for means to accomplish this in a "democratic" way. As observers, it appears to us that attention to the items in Table 2 indeed provide avenues for building a stronger

[9] Although we do suspect that co-teaching helped publicize Steve's practices, we believe that other factors were probably more important. It may be that Steve's status as one of very few male teachers and the fact that his innovations were more easily exportable made it much easier for others to adopt his ideas. Steve had a reputation as the "most cutting edge" of the teachers, but from our perspective, Tina was also "cutting edge."

professional community. Once that community comes into its own, some classroom level changes might well occur on their own. More importantly, it will become possible to have the kind of professional collaboration that will encourage teachers to work together and to support each other to create a school consistent with the shared vision. None of the schools in the study were yet far down the road to building such a community, although all were at least warming their engines.

Democracy At The Classroom Level

Democracy at the classroom level is in many ways easier to achieve than building-level democracy. In schools where individual classrooms are relatively self-contained communities with one teacher, as was the case in all of the project elementary schools, teachers with an interest in student empowerment and classroom community can more or less do what they please to further this goal. Barriers can be imposed from higher levels, and indeed all schools faced the problem of preparing students for statewide assessment and therefore of adhering to a detailed curriculum imposed by the state. At a lower administrative level, principals and district-level administrators can either create barriers or facilitate development of strong, mutually supportive classroom communities. Because the schools in the study were self-selected, it is not surprising that all of them had principals who gave teachers enormous leeway in creating their classroom communities.[10] There were certainly no requirements that classrooms contain neat rows of desks, maintain relative silence, or complete certain textbook pages on certain days.

Teaching collaboration through experience!

There is no question that school classrooms do not function as true democracies. Students cannot choose the curriculum, set all of the rules of behavior, nor elect to go elsewhere if they do not like the place in which they find themselves. Nonetheless, there is a great deal of room for sharing of power between teacher and students, and among students, and for defining the culture of a particular classroom. Teachers in the Whole Schooling Research Project used a variety of methods for creating classroom communities, and also varied in the importance given to this activity. On one extreme was Shelley, a first grade teacher, who said that her primary concern during the first six weeks of school was building community. Only after that did she bring curriculum up to equal status in her thinking about her classroom. The other extreme that exists in some schools was not observed in the Whole Schooling Research Project schools. This extreme is represented by teachers who see their students as a group of individuals, each in the room to accomplish only their own goals, with a high value on competition and independence that outweighs potential community values of cooperation and collaboration. Although we did not observe such classrooms within the study, there were a few classrooms that were closer to that extreme than to Shelley's.

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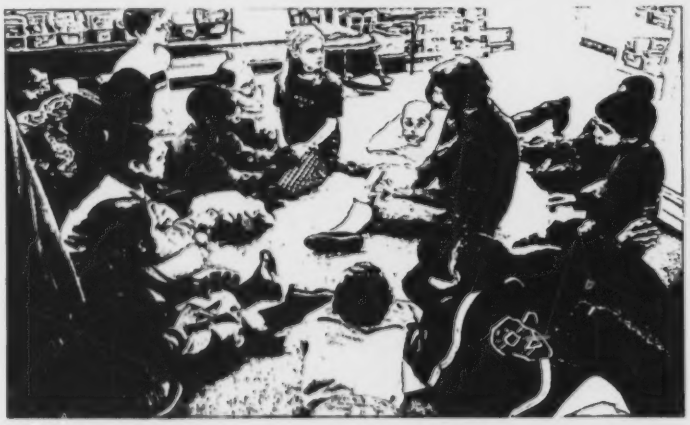
[10] One exception may prove to be Meadowview, where there was a change in principal in the last year of the study. So far, this principal has sent mixed messages and it is not clear how the school culture will readjust after she has settled in.

When is a classroom a community?

From the point of view of the Whole Schooling study, a number of criteria must be met in order for a classroom to be considered a community:

- All students physically present in the classroom have full membership in the group, regardless of academic abilities, racial/ethnic/linguistic background, socioeconomic status, or disability.
- Students share responsibility for the success of their peers.
- Students have a repertoire of strategies for providing assistance to peers and for requesting assistance from peers.
- Students and teacher share a value system that makes explicit both rights and responsibilities of all community members (including adults)
- Students have a voice in planning how they spend their time
- All community members are valued for their strengths and contributions.



Teacher conducting classroom sharing and planning meeting. Note the lack of overt symbols of authority, how the teacher intentionally placed herself on the same level as the children.

Intensive school classroom teachers used a variety of techniques to build community, and some techniques were observed across classrooms and across schools. These are summarized in Table 3.

With respect to democracy, classroom communities must routinely empower all of their members both for decision-making and for engaging in the day-to-day and moment-to-moment activities of the classroom. While various parameters are set either by the teacher or by outside forces, those parameters are as unrestrictive as possible and in any case leave a great deal of room for local control over the conduct of the classroom.

Michigan, like most other states, is responding to a movement generally referred to as "character education." Associated with this movement are many attempts to define "character" and to delineate the rights and responsibilities of students in schools. Unfortunately, much of what parades as "character" is actually passive submission to authority. Rights are often confused with responsibilities, and many activities that are neither end up categorized as one or the other. For example, one of the researcher's children brought home a notice from school that a "right" of all students was to donate to charity and therefore all students must exercise that right

Table VI.2-3: The classroom as a democratic community		
Classroom rules/laws	Shared code of conduct makes sense for all members of the classroom community	Code is based on a desire to achieve classroom goals, rather than to conform to external authority figures
Agenda setting	Given some parameters provided by the teacher, students help plan the day, the week, the unit, as developmentally appropriate	There is room to explore individual interests, proceed at varying paces and to varying depths, and allow for limitation such as limited attention span
Time allocation	Students have a voice in allocating their time to items on the agenda, both as a group and individually	Adults provide assistance in learning to allocate time appropriately; students are given room to make adjustments as needed
Peers as resources	Students view their peers as resources and are free to draw upon those resources in most contexts	Adults help all students identify the areas in which they are resources and help students draw upon peer resources
Evaluation of work	Students understand the purpose of their work and share in determining appropriate means for evaluating its quality	Adults offer a repertoire of approaches to evaluating student work, with respect to both process and product
Classroom functions as a social unit	Students plan and carry out events that serve to enhance group membership and connect to the larger community, including both the school and parents	Adults value social functions as an integral part of the general curriculum and work to make sure all participants share the values of the classroom community

by bringing in old shoes for a charity shoe drive. While one may argue that a responsibility to be charitable is part of "good character," it is stretching things just a bit to then argue that the "right" to be charitable is a basic right and that it must be fulfilled very specifically in a way determined unilaterally by people in authority.

In general, the kinds of codes of conduct generated under the character education banner consist of long lists of "responsibilities" assigned to students, along with a few pseudo-rights that actually accrue benefits to the authority figures far more than to the students to whom the rights are ascribed. Oddly, current notions of character appear to be connected to the idea that people are primarily, if not exclusively, motivated by extrinsic rewards or desire to avoid punishment. For example, in a recent court case where a parent was trying to protect her child's privacy rights by not having classroom grades announced publicly, a judge deciding against the parent stated that the desire to avoid humiliation was a valuable and powerful motivator for school success. In accordance with this belief, tied to posted codes of conduct or classroom rules are posted behavior charts of various types. In some, there is a token attempt to offer "positive" support by marking down only positive evaluations of behavior. Of course, not having any (or many) positive markers (stickers, hatch-marks, etc.) is just as negative as old-fashioned black marks. Other classrooms are more straightforward and have charts that record "violations" using one method or another.

> In one classroom, there is a chart that has a labeled pocket for every student. If a green slip is protruding form the pocket, the student is in good standing with respect to classroom conduct. If a blue slip is protruding, the student is "on warning." If a red slip is protruding, then some action is under way, usually involving reporting the "bad" behavior to the parent and completing some sort of penitential activity. While a

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researcher was observing in this classroom, a parent dropped by. Another student, not her son, immediately greeted her in order to bring to her attention that her son was "on warning."

While it is possible to imagine that such systems could function in a way that genuinely builds community, allowing students to help each other learn to adjust their behavior to an agreed upon standard, we did not observe this happening. In such a classroom, the student running up to the visiting parent would presumably have outlined the ways in which she and her peers were helping the student "on warning." Instead, such charts served the traditional function of providing a public forum to adults to vent frustration with students and a means to "motivate" students by subjecting them to public humiliation when for whatever reason they have deviated from prescribed behavior.

Inclusive, multi-age teacher records students' descriptions of what they do and how they are in their class for project researcher.

In a Whole Schooling classroom, or indeed any genuinely inclusive classroom, any code of conduct must make sense for all members of the classroom community and there must be consensus about both the code and any means used to enforce (or evaluate compliance with) that code. In many classrooms in the Whole Schooling Research Project, standard codes of conduct were posted on the wall of the classroom. These appeared to remain constant from year to year, created by the teacher or at least adopted by the teacher without any consideration of the specific needs or characteristics of the classroom community to which they are applied. As described above, some classrooms also had behavior charts of various kinds.

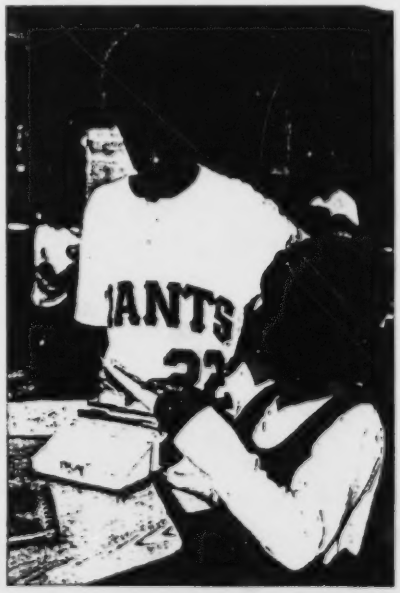
In most of the classrooms that came closest to following the Whole Schooling principles, however, we did not observe such materials. In a few classrooms, teachers had substituted behavior principles associated with cooperative or collaborative learning for those found in more traditional classrooms. These, too, were apparently created without consultation with students, but in most cases it was clear that considerable effort had been put into explaining the principles and why they benefited the entire classroom community. Moving further toward genuine student empowerment, a few classrooms had posted codes that appeared to have been generated, or at least adapted, by the students themselves. Finally, in a few classrooms such materials were entirely absent, replaced by a strong emphasis on a few guiding principles that permeated all aspects of classroom life. For example, some teachers had worked with students to develop a shared understanding of personal space and the extent of such personal space, acceptable approaches to adjusting space requirements to accomplish specific tasks or take into account individual needs, and procedures for dispute resolution should any community member feel unjustly treated.

Beyond setting global parameters for classroom management and student behavior, Whole Schooling Research Project teachers also varied in the extent to which their students influenced

the daily agenda, and even longer-term plans for classroom activities. Some teachers at almost every school included agenda-setting as a routine morning activity undertaken when students were first settling into the school day. Some teachers used formal charts and schedule formats, others created more flexible agendas by writing on blackboards or other erasable surfaces. First grade teacher Shelley, for example, used the blackboard to create an agenda in web format. Students worked with her to recall work in progress and work already planned. She than added any items that were part of her plan for the day and students were also free to propose activities. We observed several occasions, for example, where students proposed following up on a topic raised tangentially on a previous day or which had captured greater interest than Shelley had expected. The students then worked with Shelley to come up with a proposed schedule by estimating time required for various activities, thinking about the nature of the task (group work, independent work, requiring teacher support, etc.), and also the flow of the day. Sometimes items would be eliminated or postponed; if postponed, they would be left on the blackboard so as not to be forgotten in later agenda-setting discussions.

Shelley would return to the agenda frequently during the day, asking students to evaluate how things were going and making changes as needed. If the class reached a point where insufficient time was available to move to a next agenda item, Shelley would point that out and ask for suggestions of different ways to use the time. Sometimes she would propose an activity that was guaranteed to get student support, particularly when she suggested a physical activity to allow everyone to be up and moving for a little while.

Third grade teacher Larry refined this approach with his somewhat more mature students, working more judgments about time into agenda-setting discussions. For example, he worked with students to decide when they would need a warning that a work period was about to come to a close: the time required would depend on the activities underway. He also worked on telling time, as did Shelley, asking students what the clock would say "five minutes before stopping time" or what time they would be stopping if they spent 45 minutes on an activity. These approaches of course teach a great deal about both telling time and time management, but at the same time they allow the students to exert far more control over their day than is possible in a traditional classroom.



One of the basic tenets of both Whole Schooling and inclusive education is the view of the classroom as a learning community in which students learn at least as much from each other as from their teachers. For students with disabilities, peers are often viewed as "natural supports" who can assist with many aspects of the school day at least as effectively as teachers and support staff. Whole Schooling goes further by making mutual support a goal among all students. Students must be empowered to offer and seek assistance when it is needed and cooperative work must be facilitated until students have learned to cooperate independent of adult intervention most of the time. Whole Schooling Research Project teachers used a wide variety of approaches to creating learning communities, ranging from more or less standardized approaches to cooperative or collaborative

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learning to much more unique methods. One unique and effective method that was observed in Julie's second grade classroom was a technique she called "One, two, then me." Students were not to ask her for help until they had first sought the assistance of two peers. Furthermore, she often recommended specific individuals as resources on specific topics. This provided a clever means for designating less able students as genuine resources: if a student had received extensive extra help with some task, he or she then became the resource of choice on that task. When Julie provided one-on-one or small group assistance, she made sure that she left the students prepared to assume this role by identifying resource materials, providing models for reference, and so forth. Thus the student could serve as a resource even to a student who was completing even a much more complex version of the task at hand.

Students setting learning goals together.

Evaluation of student work is an aspect of education that greatly influences classroom climate and the degree to which a classroom community can genuinely be built. Not surprisingly, many Whole Schooling Research Project teachers worked constantly on refining their approaches to evaluating student work, both work in process and final products, and on teaching students to evaluate their own work and the work of peers. Across many classrooms, teachers used two general strategies to shape evaluation: "personal best" and "just right" tasks. For example, Melanie taught her multiage upper elementary school classroom to evaluate potential free reading books quickly to make sure they were "just right" for their reading abilities. She then expanded the concept of "just right" work to apply to all of the tasks students undertook in her classroom. If a student defined a task in a way that was not challenging and not a genuine learning activity, it was not "just right." Similarly, if a student attempted a task that was so difficult he did not even know where to start, he would be assisted in finding a "just right" starting place and task definition.

The notion of "personal best" is closely tied to "just right." In Larry's third grade classroom, students were reminded daily that the goal for every day at school was achievement of a "personal best". When students shared work with peers, or simply presented it to Larry for review, the question was the same: is this a personal best, and if not, what would you have to do to make it a personal best. In many classrooms, students helped select the work that would be kept in their portfolios to document progress through the year. The criterion for selection of such work was often being a "personal best." This approach allowed teachers to move away from standardized grading, which does not work in classrooms where students are working at a variety of levels and in any case creates a climate of competition antithetical to building community.

Almost all classroom in this country use social events as a means of building a sense of community, no matter how minimal that sense may be. Holiday parties and open houses in some form are universal, at least in elementary schools. In the majority of classrooms, however, these activities operate independently from the "real" business of the classroom and are often presented to the students (often by "homeroom mothers") rather than planned and executed by the students themselves. Schools and classrooms in the Whole Schooling Research Project

demonstrated a wide range of community-building activities that were far more effective, and consistent with the Whole Schooling principles, then the traditional parties.

In some cases, these events were still largely planned by adults, but with clear community-building goals in mind. For example, students completing the school reading program at Evergreen were offered rewards such as an evening when they were permitted, even encouraged, to roller-skate through the halls of the school and then get together for snacks. When Steve learned that the high school homecoming parade was coming up, he asked his fifth grade class whether they would like to participate by building and manning a float. His class then became the first elementary school class ever to participate in the high school parade. While some planning was done at school, the float itself was built at the home of one of the students with the assistance of both Steve and several parents. This project's most obvious outcome was a strong sense of classroom community, but it also afforded Steve the opportunity to work on a variety of skills, especially math skills, in an authentic task and also to forge stronger connections with both parents and high school students.

In a second grade classroom at Hamilton, students worked with their teacher to put a new twist on the traditional Valentine's Day party. They planned a tea for their parents, creating and producing menus, transforming their classroom into a tea room, and then filling the roles of restaurant staff while serving tea and sweets to their invited parents. Again, this event helped forge stronger bonds within the classroom and to increase parent involvement at the same time that it provided an authentic context in which the teacher could address a wide range of academic skills.

Lunch club participants have fun and decide on activities for the week.

While the kinds of methods and approaches described in Table 3 are often considered the domain of only middle and upper class schools, this proved untrue within the Whole Schooling project. Perhaps most striking was the success achieved at Avery and Meadowview with respect to creating truly democratic classrooms with empowered students. Indeed, we observed a third grade classroom at Avery, which serves the most impoverished community in the study, that could easily have been exchanged with a third grade classroom at Hamilton, the most affluent school in the study. The book clubs and parents-invited activities at Avery were as successful and at least as effective as those taken for granted at more affluent schools. These results make it clear that democratic classrooms and student empowerment are not merely a privilege for the affluent few but a viable educational culture for all students.

CONCLUSION

We think it is notable that in the inclusive education movement, we find little discussion in the literature about democracy and democratic ideals. Yet, as we have discussed in this chapter of our report, democratic functioning, at minimal levels, is a pre-requisite to an inclusive school. Neither, on the other hand, does the literature on democratic schooling refer to inclusion of students with disabilities as an integral component. The same can be said of other progressive education movements and philosophies, such as whole language and other constructivist approaches to learning, in which democracy is seen as an essential component. Indeed, three researchers in this project participated in several meetings and interactions with some identified leaders in these arenas during the study period in which inclusive education was intentionally ignored or outright rejected. In the schools we observed we saw important movements towards the merger of democracy and inclusive schooling and many gaps that were apparent. There is a great need for educators concerned with democracy, social justice, inclusive education, and child-centered, constructivist learning practices to understand the interrelatedness of these concepts and forge additional research, dialogue, and policy initiatives towards this end.

WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

VI.3 INSTRUCTION

Toward Authentic, Multi-level Instruction

The Whole Schooling framework has posited the hypothesis that authentic, multi-level instructional techniques facilitate effective learning for all students, help build a classroom community, and create an approach to instruction that makes the management of inclusive education easier and more effective. We used this hypothesis as a lens to view interactions within schools and classrooms. In this section we discuss the ways in which classroom teachers dealt with the differing ability levels that they found in their classrooms and draw some beginning guidelines concerning the best inclusive instructional practices we observed.

KEY FINDINGS

A major impediment to effective schooling for all children and youth, and to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education, is instruction that presumes that all students are, or should be, on 'grade level'. Such instruction insures that the needs of both highly able and students with greater cognitive limitations will not be met.

In schools seeking to be inclusive, educators are trying different strategies to deal with ability differences within the general education classroom: stable ability grouping (within and across classes), adapting curriculum, differentiated instruction, and what we have termed 'authentic multi-level teaching'. Stable ability grouping re-created separation within the classroom. Adapting curriculum, while a move in a better direction, assumes that the existing curricular goals, methods, and outcomes are fixed without regard to student needs and that individualized adaptations must be made.

Observations of teachers who were highly effective when instructing students vastly differing levels of ability led to a different way of thinking about dealing with difference: designing lessons from the beginning that would allow students to work together but at their own level of ability on common projects. Such teaching was always centered on authentic, meaningful tasks rather than direct skills instruction or simulated activities contrived solely for skills instruction.

Combined with strategies to build community in a classroom where students assist, collaborate with, and interact with one another, and specialized support services, from professionals working as a team to assist classroom teachers, authentic multi-level instruction holds great promise for creating classrooms where all children are challenged at their own ability levels while learning to work as a heterogeneous, inclusive community.

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APPROACHES TO DIFFERENT ABILITY LEVELS

We identified several strategies teachers use for dealing with differing ability levels among students. Some strategies foster genuinely inclusive teaching, while others, to varying degrees, encourage the separation of children with given ability levels from their peers. Schools as whole varied in the degree to which the various strategies are used, as did individual teachers within schools. We begin with a review of these typical strategies, which can be grouped into six general approaches as illustrated in the Figure VI.3-1.

SCHOOL APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTION

Approaches to Dealing with Differing Abilities and Learning Challenges

Each school involved in the study tended toward a different pattern related to the handling of differing ability levels within the classroom. Despite this, however, patterns varied widely across teachers in every building. Below, we highlight patterns by school and profile differences among teachers in their approaches. As we shall see, instructional patterns are highly related to the way that students with special needs are placed in classes, the configuration of support for teachers and students, and the approach of the school and teacher to building community and responding to behavioral challenges. Most schools in our study used combinations of the strategies we describe below. However, the balance of the use of these strategies gravitated toward the two ends of the continuum: ability grouping at one end and authentic, multi-level teaching with consistently heterogeneous grouping at the other. The following chart illustrates predominant patterns in the schools.

Figure VI.3-1
Approaches to Ability Differences

1. **One size fit all – Segregation.** Teach all at the same level, send those who don't fit to separate classes or schools.
2. **Stable Ability grouping** – clustering students across classes by perceived 'special need' and ability grouping for instruction within a class.
3. **Pull out / pull aside Instruction**: One-on-one help, delivered in a remediation or parallel curriculum mode, often at the back or side of the class.
4. **Adapting curriculum** - Individual adaptations for students for whom the existing curriculum is either too challenging or too easy.
5. **Differentiated instruction.** Instruction designed to have students work at different levels in different groups and on different tasks in the classroom.
6. **Authentic, multi-level teaching**: Designing instruction so that students may function at multiple levels of ability, engaging in authentic learning, receiving support, yet learning in heterogeneous groups and situations.

Table VI.3-1

	Elementary Schools				High Schools	
	Meadow-view	Hamilton	Evergreen	Armstrong	Rogers	Drummond
Whole group/Segregation					x	
Stable ability grouping		x	**X**	**X**	**X**	x
Pull-out / pull-aside	x	x	**X**		x	x
Adapting		x	**X**	x	**X**	x
Differentiated instruction			x	x		
Authentic, Multi-Level Teaching	**X**	**X**	x	x		x

X = Predominate pattern x = Lesser pattern

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Meadowview Elementary had the greatest use of authentic multi-level instruction during the first years of this study. Multi-age classes were available in all grades except kindergarten. While teachers varied in their abilities, nevertheless a tour of the building would find a consistent pattern of cooperative, project-based learning, even among the weakest teachers.

At Hamilton Elementary, many teachers throughout the building used engaging, hands-on learning, cooperative learning, and other strategies conducive to multi-level teaching. The innovative teaching staff offered opportunities for students to function at differing levels of ability. However, they also made extensive use of ability grouping and pull-out or pull-aside practices. The building had two special education classes to accommodate the lower academic levels of some students. During the project period, these students were mainstreamed into general education classes at an increasing rate. However, at the end of the study, these separate classes were still in place. In addition, special education teachers and paraprofessionals were observed working with students at the back or side of classes. The gifted specialist pulled students out of class for individual projects in a separate classroom. The early intervention literacy team used a variation of guided reading that was dependent upon stable ability grouping. In some other situations, we observed ability grouping as well. In addition, district textbooks and teaching materials tended to direct teachers to one level learning.

Evergreen Elementary had wide ranges of teaching practice. Many teachers used engaging, multi-level teaching strategies. One teacher at this school represented truly exemplary practices. Interestingly, she was not identified by the principal as a teacher on whom to focus nor was she allowed to have special education students in her room. Within each grade, students with special education labels were clustered into one class in upper elementary, where a special education teacher would provide support for one half day and a paraprofessional for the other half. This school made important distinctions between adapted and modified curriculum. Adapted curriculum involved minor shifts in the existing curriculum. A modified curriculum essentially was a parallel curriculum and activities in either ability groups or pull-aside supports by a special education teacher or, more often, a paraprofessional.

Armstrong Primary, while one of the most inclusive of all the schools, nevertheless relied on ability grouping, along with some degree of clustering of students across classes, as the prime mode of organizing instruction. Most typically, students would be broken into three or four groups by general ability, with each group led by an adult, typically the general education teacher, specialist (either the

special education teacher, speech therapist, or Title I teacher), and one or more paraprofessionals. Students would engage in various learning activities, often rotating from one center to another. However, in Armstrong there were important exceptions. The speech therapist and a general education teacher had together developed a reading/writing workshop classroom specifically to assist students who needed additional assistance in language development.

Drummond High School was designed from the beginning to encourage interdisciplinary teaming among teachers. Some interdisciplinary work did occur that assisted students in working at different levels. Students seeking advanced placement stayed within general education classes and contracted with teachers for extension work.

Rogers High School was the most traditional school in the core academic courses, so much so that students with mild disabilities did not attend these classes but went to a resource class. Vocational subjects such as horticulture and computer courses, as well as some science and social studies classes were more heterogeneous and tended to use more applied, hands-on learning activities.

Thus, we saw wide mixes of approaches to dealing with ability differences across and within schools. However, each school had a clear culture that influenced all teachers in the school. What did these strategies for dealing with difference look like in concrete practice? We now describe examples of the practices that we observed.

One Size Fit All – Segregation

Keeping Students On 'Grade Level':

The prevailing approach in general education is teaching as if students do not vary in their academic abilities and conform to a theoretical construct called 'grade level'. However, we know that children vary dramatically in their ability levels, even discounting children identified as having disabilities. Over the last three years, teachers in schools involved in our research project were asked, "What is the range of abilities of students in your class?" Every teacher stated that students crossed at least five grade levels. A second grade teacher, for example, said, "pre-kindergarten to 5th grade." Most teachers assessed wider ranges: "First grade through eighth grade reading levels," said one grade 3-5 multi-age teacher. This means that dealing with variation in ability is far from being a 'special education' or 'inclusion' issue. Traditionally, children at either end of this continuum have often been removed as the school tries, unsuccessfully, to maintain a 'one size only' curriculum. However, even when students labeled "disabled" or "gifted" are removed, a wide range of abilities remains in every general education classroom.

All reading the same text, expected to function at the same level.

Donna and Paul co-teach a third grade class at Evergreen Elementary. Donna is the general education teacher and Paul the special education teacher. They regularly take turns leading lessons. There is also a classroom aide. Students with labels or those who are considered at-risk are clustered into this classroom to take advantage of the co-teaching model. The following experience was recorded on videotape.

> I arrived as Paul began a reading lesson. He was telling the class to put everything away; nothing should be left on their desks. Paul says they have two chapters to finish

in Chalk Box Kit. Paul tells class they will popcorn read after they finish the first chapter (popcorn reading is "popping" between readers in the middle of the text; Paul does this by snapping his finger and calling out a new reader – in this case, a table of students). Everyone opens their book to Chapter 8; Paul tells them to put their fingers on the word "when," he snaps his finger, and the whole class reads together. After they read a page, Paul stops them and asks them a question that they discuss among their table, and then he calls on a table to answer. They repeat this until the chapter is finished.

During this reading lesson, students are required to sit at their desks and read as a group. The teacher has decided for the students that they have to have clean desks in order to read, and also decided their desks were the best physical location for students to read. The students are given virtually no choice in how and what they will learn.

All of the students in the class are reading the same book, yet they cannot all be at the same developmental level in reading and comprehension. The levels of assistance provided by the teachers to the students do not appear varied enough to match the many levels of reading and comprehension in the room, and there is little room for students to help each other with Paul leading the lesson in this manner. When they do popcorn reading, the table called begins reading loudly, but fades fast, and all I can hear is Paul, who reads along with them. They read the last pages out loud, all together. The longer they read, the more the class fades.

Because the students are at many points during the lesson reading aloud as a class, it is easy for those students who are struggling to read to not read at all. When the students are "popcorn" reading with their table groups, Paul's voice overshadows their voices as he reads with them. Also, reading out loud and together as the students did during this lesson does not allow for students to move along at their own pace, reading and rereading as each student finds necessary, which may prevent the students from fully comprehending the text.

Since the students had little or no choice in what or how they would read, it is suggested that the text read was not based on student interest or developmental reading level at this time. Also, given choices, students may have chosen to read independently, in pairs or triads, or maybe even in larger groups.

She can't keep up. *She needs to go to special education.*

Marlene is a third grade teacher in an urban school that has stated a commitment to becoming an inclusive school. However, there is tremendous pressure in the district to increase the achievement level of children so that they do better on the state's standardized test, the MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Profile). This fall she has a young student with Down syndrome in her room and she is very frustrated. We talked with her one morning about this situation.

"She just can't keep up. She can't read any of the textbooks in my room. She barely reads below first grade level. I don't have any materials to use with her. She needs to be in a special education room," Marlene explained in great frustration.

Another teacher asked, "You don't have any books in your room except those on grade level?" "No I don't," said Marlene. "I have thought about talking with the kindergarten teacher but haven't gotten to it. They won't buy any books for me and I don't have the money to spend on books for her." As we entered her class, indeed, the only written materials in the room are textbooks. We wonder about other children in the room who are at both higher and lower abilities than grade level; we also wonder about the engagement of the children in reading if the only materials they have are textbooks.

Marlene continues. "But that's not all of it. Her behavior is just awful. She just won't do anything and gets frustrated and acts out. She also has seizures and won't take her medication. So we've begun to make her wear a helmet so that she won't hurt herself. Children with behavior problems like that should not be in class."

As we ask Marlene more details about the behaviors, Marlene indicates that at the first of the semester, her behavior was OK and she got along well with the other students. "When did her problem behaviors start?" we ask. Marlene stops and thinks a bit. "Right after we started requiring her to wear the helmet," she said.

Marlene was convinced that this child should not be in her class. Yet, possible solutions seemed obvious: obtain reading and other materials at the student's level and also work with the mother to see if sufficient seizure control can be achieved to allow removal of the helmet. In a school with a culture that demands all children be taught at the same level, even when the evidence is clear that this is not working, making these relatively minor efforts would call into question much of the practice in this teacher's class and the entire school.

Stable Ability Grouping

Clustering Students Across And Within Classes By Perceived Ability

The most widespread means of addressing the broad range of abilities represented in every classroom, when it is addressed at all, is subdivision of the class into ability groups. The traditional example is the three-reading-group scenario in place for decades in American schools.

Direct instruction pull-out group for students not at grade level.

There are many reasons why routine reliance on ability grouping works against inclusive education. Most obviously, students with cognitive disabilities routinely are assigned to the "low" group, effectively being re-segregated. Non-disabled students who share their grouping suffer also share the stigma of being labeled "low." Furthermore, in a classroom that has natural proportions of students with "gifted" and "cognitively or learning disabled" students, the top and bottom groups may simply become miniature versions of previously segregated special programs. This leaves that vast range of abilities in the middle still grouped together. Some teachers respond to this problem by creating more ability groups. This becomes a management

nightmare for the teacher, and students get very little instructional time from the teacher. At the same time, ability grouping greatly decreases opportunities for students to work together and teach each other. Too often, the most interesting assignments and most innovative teaching methods are reserved for the higher groups, again replicating the documented problem that the best teaching practices are often found in segregated gifted programs even though they are at least as useful for other students.

We observed several variations on ability grouping. Interestingly, most schools, aware of the controversy regarding ability grouping, used the term 'flexible groups', as a way of cushioning the impact in their own minds. In some classes, ability grouping was, in fact, flexibly determined, shifting from day to day. In others, however, even though the same term was in use, such groups were highly stable and membership criteria were quite clear to all involved.

Three of the four elementary schools used stable ability grouping where students were in the same group at least for several weeks at a time. Armstrong Primary organized a large part of the instructional process around ability groups for guided reading as well as ability-based learning centers. Hamilton Elementary utilized what they called 'flex groups' in which a team of adults – a reading recovery teacher and several paraprofessionals – would work in grades 1-3 for 45 minute sessions three times per week, breaking children into ability groups to work on reading skills. Similarly, at Evergreen Elementary School, students within classes were broken into groups and upper elementary students behind grade level walked daily down the hall with the special education teacher for a scripted lesson using phonics-based Direct Instruction materials. The following examples illustrate how stable ability grouping looked in classes.

Opportunities lost. *Children with higher abilities engaged in interesting reading while students with special needs drilled on skills.*

In this 3rd grade class, we see Helen, the general education teacher, a special education teacher, and a paraprofessional. As we enter the room, the kids are all milling around and country music is playing. The teacher explains she does this during 5 minutes of transition time. "Sometimes," she says, "They do a dance to the music." The students hear her and quickly form a circle doing a kick dance to the music. Students with and without disabilities are engaged. The teacher explains how she tries to incorporate multiple intelligences into her teaching.

All students with disabilities for that grade are in her class. She has an aide who works in the class in the morning and the special education teacher in the afternoon. Today, however, the paraprofessional and special education teacher are both in the class together Four children with learning disabilities, two with mental retardation, and one with emotional disturbance labels are in this class of 25 students.

Students share their images of a character in a book while in the classroom other students trace letters in sand or read simple material and answer questions on a worksheet.

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Students are seated at tables in a U shape. However, Nathan, a student with mental retardation who is considered to have behavioral challenges and functions at a much lower level, sits at a desk off to the side of the room.

After break time, the teacher announces that it is reading time and the children on cue divide themselves into two ability groups. Nathan is with his paraprofessional in the corner of the room, working on a worksheet. One group is with the special education teacher using Direct Instruction to repeat letters and sounds over and over as she follows a scripted lesson where she is told exactly what to say. One student comments, "I hate school." The other group, clearly with the higher level of ability, is out in the hall where the students are reading a book aloud together with the general education teacher. She has asked them to write a story from the perspective of one of the characters in the story.

Here we see ability grouping and one-to-one special education assistance that creates a classroom culture that clearly separates children based on cognitive or academic ability. Tellingly, this is occurring in a classroom where the teacher is thinking consciously of approaches and strategies aimed at differentiating instruction. Unfortunately, the strategies of ability grouping and one-on-one instruction seem to be at the top of her repertoire. It is clear that the students are well aware of these ability groupings.

The students in the higher group are involved in a very interesting, engaging activity that uses higher orders of thinking. The other students are engaged in various levels of drills on skill instruction. The activity of the higher group, however, had great potential to involve all students at their level of ability, incorporating skills instruction into this engaging activity. This did not happen, however. Rather, the students in the low groups were restricted to skill instruction that had no authentic meaning or purpose. They did not have a chance to see why mastering these skills would even be useful and were excluded for working on higher-order comprehension skills that could have been approached if appropriate methods and materials had been used.

Ability grouping for phonics. *Skills but not meaning.*

Alice is a second grade teacher. The following experience occurred in her class during reading, when the class is divided in to ability groups taught by three different people – the teacher, paraprofessional, and Title I specialist.

The teacher's group is reading a book from the guided reading room. They are doing round-robin reading. The teacher "shushes" the students who aren't supposed to be reading. When a student doesn't know a word, she either tells it to them or helps the child sound it out. When they get to this phrase in the story, she asks them to read it together: "Ha ha, he he, ho ho, hay!" When one student is reading, the others do not appear to be paying attention. Ashley starts to tell a story about something that happened the night before. The teacher puts her hand on her book and says, "Ashley, let's stay on task".

The text chosen by the teacher for the reading group is a piece of writing created for a guided reading series based on levels. That is, each piece of text has been specifically created to fall into a specific level as determined by the publisher, and the teacher fits groups of children into those

different levels based on their abilities. It was not written by an author primarily interested in communicating with his readers. The children did not choose the book they were reading; Alice chose it for them. Their lack of interest is demonstrated by the talking that occurs by the children who are not actively reading at any given moment.

Having the students read using the round-robin reading method does not give them the opportunity to support one another while they read, and may be excruciating to students who are not confident about their reading abilities. It essentially becomes a way for the teacher to hear groups of children read on their own and out loud in a short amount of time, while keeping control of a larger number of students, most of whom are unengaged in the task. It is difficult for anyone to maintain comprehension when listening in this disjointed way, and the word-level support offered by the teacher does not help the children focus on the meaning of the story. Some students may read the story out loud and fluently without comprehending. For these and other reasons, round robin reading has been widely discredited by reading researchers[1], and yet it is still widely used by teachers who do not have a repertoire of more effective strategies.

Pull-out or Pull-aside Instruction

The most traditional method for providing instruction by support staff and specialists in the general education classroom is pulling students out of the class or to the back or side of the room. In some cases, this becomes a special variation on ability grouping if the specialist works with a small group of students. In other cases, one-on-one tutoring may take place. Such an approach is based on the presumption that what struggling students need most is individual attention by an adult.

Out and to the side: *I think they ought to be in a special education classroom.*

Over two years we observed a teacher in a school that had been working quite hard to promote inclusive education among the total staff. There was much discussion, visitations of other schools, and training supported by the principal. In this school, two special education teachers provided full-time support in general education classes. We were quite struck by the dramatic differences in how these two teachers approached their roles. One teacher worked collaboratively with the general education teachers in all her classes, helping to develop lessons in which all students could participate while paying attention to the needs of individual students on her caseload.

Paraprofessional works with child with mental retardation on parallel curriculum while other students work on other projects together in a different part of the room.

[1] e.g., Opitz, M. F. and Rasinski, T. Good-bye Round Robin: 25 Effective Oral Reading Strategies. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.

The other special education teacher, Dave, systematically worked one-on-one or with a small group of two or three children on his caseload, in all cases separating the children from other students and distracting their attention from the overall class activity in the process. One day while talking with a researcher, he said, "I think these students should be in a separate classroom." As we shall see, Dave created his own version of such a separate classroom in the way that he delivered support services. Following are some excerpts from our observations of Dave's work in classes:

> Dave pulls a first grade student named Nelson out of class 2 1/2 hours per week to work on very directed phonics using Orton Gillingham approaches. Nelson misses class activities during this time. Nelson is re-entering the room after being with Dave for a 45 minute one on one session. The class has been involved in an activity where they are drawing, writing, and making a book about a story that they read. Nelson sits down and Dave directs him to read a story by himself.

> The teacher is having the students develop simple machines using materials she has put on each table in a box. Dave goes to Jason, a student on his caseload labeled as severe learning disabilities but who appears to function at a range of educable mental retardation. Dave is constantly interacting with Jason, talking with him, asking questions, drawing attention and focus away from the teacher, and playing no active role in the whole activity of the class.

We talked with two of the general education teachers being supported by Dave. Both were frustrated, largely because Dave did parallel activities with students off to the side or back of the class, or interrupting the work of the students. The discussion with Delores, a 4th grade teacher was particularly revealing.

> Delores has support people come in who include special education (resource), at risk (learning center), speech and language, and bilingual. She expressed frustration because support staff, particularly Dave, do not necessarily bring additional actual teaching activities or resources into the class but rather spend their time 'helping' one specific targeted child, sometimes actually get in the way of the student's learning by intervening when intervention is unnecessary, just to have something to do. As a way of underlining her frustration, Delores said, "I will take students with special needs. Just leave me alone." She stated, "There are just too many [support staff] with no clear roles.

In this conversation, differences in teaching philosophy became apparent. In talking with Delores, I held my hands out and indicated that one hand was 'phonics only' and the other hand was 'whole language' and asked her to locate herself and then the support staff as a whole along this continuum. She said her approach was close to the far end of whole language and that of the support staff closer to phonics only. This school is filled with highly creative and innovative teachers who tend towards more constructivist methods. Consistently, many support staff tend to focus on direct instruction. The 'literacy teams' that come in have a structured program built exclusively upon phonemic awareness and phonics. Dave is far to the extreme in this direction having a very behaviorist, skill-oriented approach to all instruction.

We saw these concerns play out again in a second grade class with a general education teacher named Sharon.

> Students are sitting around six tables, 5-6 students per table engaging in 'sponge' activities, fun activities they can select from a basket in the morning as they arrive. During this time, Dave is working with two kids at a separate table. Shortly, the teacher calls all the children to come to the sitting rug area in from of the white board. However, Dave continues to work with these two students even after the teacher has started discussions with the kids.

Later in the morning this pattern continues.

> Dave comes back to class with Mary, a child he has taken out. He looks at Bobby, points to him, and motions him to come with him. He leaves the class. Mary sits down outside the circle of children at the back of the group. Sharon is reading a book to the children, showing them the pictures and asking, "What do you think the book is about?" Kids share ideas. Gradually Mary scoots up to join the group. After only about 5 minutes, Dave comes back and peaks in the glass of the door. Getting Mary's attention, he motions for her and she once again leaves the room in the middle of the story.

While support is seen as critical in inclusive education, in these scenarios we have a general education teacher describing such support as interfering with or interrupting the learning process, separating children from one another, creating the potential for stigma and confusion. These negative results appeared especially frequently when general education teachers were using authentic multi-level teaching methods, or more traditional Whole Language approaches, but the support staff devoted themselves entirely to teaching of isolated skills.

Adapting Instruction

Assistance to Adapt a Set Lesson for a Particular Student.

Curriculum adaptation involves changes to a particular component of a lesson based on the individual needs of a child. In curriculum adaptation, the overall lesson itself is taken as a given, so that the goal is to provide individual adaptations that will allow a student to participate at some level. Typically, this occurs when the lesson is at a level that is either lower or higher than the abilities of the student.

Most of the literature on inclusive education centers on adaptations as a central strategy. Adaptations can occur in many different ways: (1) the method by which information is presented; (2) complexity, difficulty, length, or amount of work; (3) evaluation and assessment methods.

One school we studied, following the lead of in-service materials they had acquired, distinguished between adaptations and modifications. For them, adaptations involved relatively minor alterations in the typical curriculum and expectations. For example, students might be expected to be tested on five instead of 10 spelling words each week. In place of traditional print materials, a student might use large print or audiotapes. Instead of producing handwritten work, the student might highlight material in the text or use a word processor to assist with writing.

Modifications, on the other hand, involved what essentially was a parallel curriculum. Utilized for students with greater cognitive limitations, the special education teacher literally organized plastic tubs of materials and activities that the paraprofessional would use with the child at the back or corner of the room. At best, these activities were marginally related to the activities in which the rest of the class was engaged.

Such curriculum adaptations that alter curriculum content, rather than the manner in which students interact with that content, were problematic in our observations. They had the effect of perpetuating the misconception that all the other students in the class are academically identical, with only the student with a disability needing curriculum adjustments. Thus, this approach works against having teachers introduce sufficient planning and flexibility to meet the full range of needs and abilities in any given classroom. Such modifications also made it difficult for students receiving the adaptations to work with classmates, or even to feel part of the class.

In the schools we studied, adaptations went hand-in-hand with use of ability grouping or pull-out of pull-aside assistance. In both cases, students were simply given work, most often related to the same general topic as the rest of the class, that was at a lower ability level than other students.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is intended to allow students work to work at different levels in pursuit of a common curricular goal. The work of Carol Ann Tomlinson2 influential and comes from the foundation of her work with 'gifted and talented' students. In the schools we studied, we saw many teachers using strategies that allowed students to function at their own level.

However, we saw few of the particular strategies described in the differentiation literature. Such strategies seek to provide differential tasks and levels of functioning but also often have the following characteristics: (1) use ability grouping, (2) tasks of differing levels are designed by the teacher, and (3) students assignment to the tasks by the teacher, based on the teacher's evaluation of abilities of the student. In effect, most of what was referred to as "differentiated instruction" was simply a complex form of ability grouping. We began this study with an interest in observing effective practices for dealing with ability differences in heterogeneous, inclusive groupings. Generally, we did not find that "differentiated instruction" fit this description. Instead, practices we observed by selected teachers have led us to develop a concept of Authentic Multi-level Instruction (AMI) that we discuss in the next section.

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2 Tomlinson, Carol Ann. The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999.

Authentic, Multi-Level Teaching

Designing Lessons For Students At Multiple Levels
For Students To Work Together Learning At Their Own Level.

In this study, we gradually identified and gravitated toward the classrooms of selected teachers in each school whose practices seemed to provide exemplars of truly inclusive instruction; that is, instruction where children with dramatically different ability levels learned together, heterogeneously grouped, or involved in individual studies using materials at their own level of challenge. Observing and reflecting on practices we saw in the rooms of these teachers assisted us in gradually conceptualizing what we are now calling Authentic Multi-level Instruction (AMI). A discussion of this discovery process itself may be instructive.

When we began the study, the language we used to describe instructional practices that involved children at multiple levels of ability as "designing for diversity and adapting instruction." This language was based on the idea of Universal Design for Learning: if teachers design their lessons for the full range of student abilities from the beginning, then fewer adaptations will be needed. Over the course of the study, however, we felt that this language was too vague. The words indicated that teachers should design lessons for diversity but there was no indication regarding how this would happen. Gradually, we began to formulate the term, multi-level instruction, influenced by conversations with Paula Kluth of Syracuse University and Celia Oyler of Teacher's College in New York, who were also using this term.

As we shared this concept in one school, Hamilton Elementary, the principal, as well as a number of teachers, was intrigued by the idea. We held discussion groups 3 times during the second year of the project to discuss multi-level teaching. In three other schools, we discussed the idea with individual teachers. One teacher worked with us to articulate the concept and strategies on paper. We developed a paper regarding multi-level teaching that the principal of one school shared with her staff, using it to focus discussion about their move towards the inclusion of some students still attending a self-contained special education classroom. Finally, during the last year of the study, we formed an Authentic Multi-level Teaching Work Group composed of some 15 teachers largely drawn from the study schools. This group has met for the last year and has worked to articulate a clearer understanding of Authentic Multi-level Instruction, and its relationship with other practices, particularly differentiated instruction. These interactions have provided significant opportunity for reflective analysis of the practices we saw in schools. Below, we share the outcomes of this work to date in articulating an understanding of best practices for teaching that best support truly inclusive classrooms.

Principles of Authentic Multi-level Instruction

In the schools we studied, the more that teachers used authentic instructional strategies and intentionally built into these multi-level learning opportunities, the richer the learning environment, the greater progress of students, the fewer specialized adaptations were needed,

and the more time and energy the teacher had for supporting student learning. Multi-level teaching involves designing instruction in such a way that the individual needs of all students are taken into account. This is a very different way of thinking than trying to build a lesson from the bottom up by starting with discrete target skills and then crafting a lesson around such skills. AMI starts from a holistic, global view and incorporates specific needs.

Figure VI.3-2: Principles of Authentic, Multi-level Instruction

1. Authentic learning.
2. Multiple levels.
3. Scaffolding.
4. Higher order thinking.
5. Inclusive, heterogeneous grouping.
6. Integrated skill learning.
7. Focus on meaning and function.
8. Multi-modal.
9. Building on the strengths of children.
10. Fostering respect.
11. Student interests, choices, power, and voice.
12. Collaborative learning.
13. Reflection.
14. Growth and effort-based evaluation.

Traditional lesson planning starts from specifics and tries to build an overall framework. While starting from specifics is possible, most people get lost in the overwhelming plethora of details in such an approach. The most effective teachers we observed designed many lessons that allowed students to start at varying levels of complexity and academic difficulty, find a place in the activity, get help and support to go to the next level from both classmates and adults, direct their own learning with support, utilize multiple modalities of input and expression, and go as deep and far as their interests, motivation, and abilities allowed them. We have begun to outline some principles and practices for authentic, multi-level teaching that supports students with a wide range of abilities learning well together, heterogeneously grouped within and across classrooms which we describe below.

Authentic learning.

Authentic learning is foremost and central. Rather than involve students in 'school work', authentic teaching is grounded in tasks that serve real purposes. For example, rather than writing practice letters to no one in particular, authentic writing involves students in such tasks as writing to a company to tell them how they might improve their product, thinking about and substantiating suggestions; writing a letter to parents on Mother's and Father's Day; or writing a poem about what happened last evening to share with the class in poetry reading time and perhaps publish in a class book.

Authenticity is the key to genuine learning. Motivation in the leaning process is critical and authentic learning connects what occurs in school to students' lives. If the task makes sense and has value to them, students will work hard. If the only reason to do a task is that some authority demands it, intrinsic motivation goes down. Student focus on performance measures like grades and prizes, rather than on acquiring knowledge or a sense of competence.

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Authentic tasks provide a context where specific skills – from basic math skills to the ability to spell or use correct grammar – are learned. Students see the utility of a particular skill when they need it to accomplish a larger task effectively. For example, when students read one another's work, they begin to understand why spelling is important. Finally, authentic tasks establish 'space' for students to work and grow at their own levels of ability. All authentic tasks allow multiple levels of output; all complex tasks provide multiple roles that support contributions at differing levels.

VI.3-2: Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Outcomes

Competence	Skills Demonstrated
Evaluation (Higher order)	Presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.
Synthesis	Compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.
Analysis	Examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.
Application	Solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques, and rules in a different way.
Comprehension	Demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.
Knowledge (Lower Order)	Recalls facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers.

Adapted from Bloom (1956) and Fowler (1996).

Multi-level.

By multi-level we mean that students are engaged in learning activities that allow them to function at their level of ability, yet are challenged at their zone of proximal development to continue growing and learning. 'Just right' work for all students expected and supported so that teachers push and challenge students who have higher abilities but might settle for lower levels of work in traditional, decontextualized academic tasks.

Scaffolding.

Students are given support and assistance to move from their present level of functioning to the next level. Students are explicitly and systematically taught to help, support, and challenge one another as part of building community in their classroom. Specialists assist students and the general education teacher in the design of multi-level lessons and providing needed specific skill instruction, support, and assistance within the context of completing the multilevel task.

Higher-order thinking

In authentic multi-level teaching, teachers seek to involve all students in higher order thinking, in complex learning and projects at the higher end of Bloom's taxonomy[3]. Interestingly, we find that such higher orders of thinking can be approached at a wide range of abilities and that lower levels of thinking in this taxonomy are easily integrated into tasks and activities designed to encourage higher levels of thinking.

When designing their lessons to elicit higher order thinking, the most effective multi-level teachers we observed targeted the highest ability students first and then insured that students with lower abilities could participate effectively in roles that extended their learning. Framing inquiry questions and assignments for learning in ways that involve students in higher order thinking, but also allows students to approach such projects at vastly differing levels of ability, is an important skill for teachers to learn and practice. However, much of traditional instruction is based on lower level skills. Two contrasting examples are illustrative from our observations:

1. Students will develop definitions of key science terms related to plants (lower level task, makes multi-level instruction difficult).
2. Students will develop a product that demonstrates how plants grow and reproduce (higher level task, allows high degrees of multi-levels of investigation and demonstration of learning.)

In many cases, students with lower abilities might be paired with more able students to work on an activity more complex than they could accomplish alone. In other situations, instruction involved the total class and involved students in discussion, reading, or other activities. While many concepts were beyond the clear understanding of some class members, as all worked together to find valued roles for all, students learned needed skills and absorbed content in unexpected ways. Teachers felt that students with lower abilities benefited from these situations if there was an understanding that students were expected to demonstrate understandings at higher levels, if students genuinely participated, if a culture of valuing each person's understanding at a different level existed, and if this entire experience occurred with reasonable frequency.

For example, several teachers targeted the highest functioning student in the class when they selected materials to read aloud to the total class. However, the teacher also involved the class in a discussion of what the text meant as they read, seeking for deep understanding while simultaneously scaffolding for some students. Such participation allowed students to be part of

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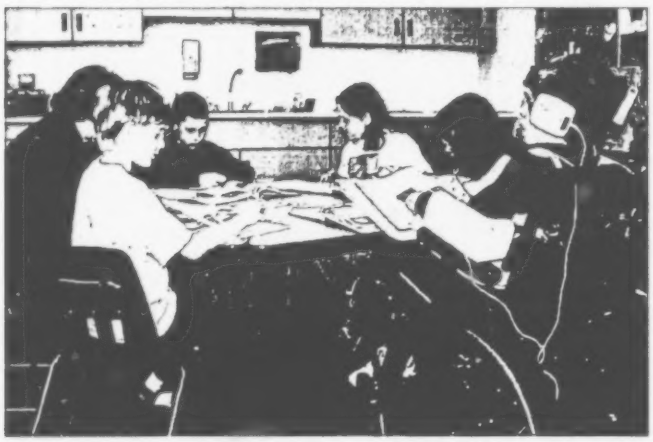
[3] Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956) Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook I, cognitive domain. New York: Toronto: Longmans, Green.
Fowler, Barbara (1996). Bloom's taxonomy and critical thinking: Critical thinking across the curriculum project. Lee's Summit, Missouri: Longview Community College.
http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/longview/ctac/blooms.htm

meaningful conversations with peers who acted as mentors and role models. We saw evidence that students with significant learning disabilities and mental retardation picked up higher levels of understanding in these situations.

Inclusive, heterogeneous.

In authentic multi-level teaching, teachers intentionally structured classes so that students of very different abilities, styles, and orientations worked together in small or large groups, or in pairs. These teachers rarely used ability grouping, and when they did, it was in ways that were extremely short-lived, typically not beyond one day.

This contrasted with other models we saw which were based on stable and ongoing ability grouping. The teaching literature is quite clear on the dangers of ability grouping for students at all levels. Interestingly, from guided reading to differentiated instruction, many educational practices now in vogue discuss the dangers of ability grouping and then go on to suggest its use under the title of 'flexible grouping'. While such writers always suggest ongoing shifting of group composition, our experience in schools demonstrated that this was rarely done. In addition, writers concerned with students labeled gifted and talented often suggest that ability grouping is the only way that the needs of highly able students can be met. This controversy founds its way into numerous individual conversations with teachers and group discussions.



In our study, however, we saw some teachers taking great care to avoid ability grouping, changing composition of any ability based groups on a frequent basis, using grouping by interest, choice, and self-selection of 'just right' work rather than teacher assignment to minimize negative effects of ability grouping that did occur.

Our Authentic Multi-level Teacher Work Group developed the following guidelines for the use of ability groups.

- Groups are not assigned as ongoing, 'stable' ability groups that form a routine.
- When used is based on specific skill needs in common with other students – mini-skill lessons.
- Teachers assure that skill groups have varied compositions from day to day.
- Groups are largely based on choices of children involved – common interests or preferred learning partners and sometimes are driven by requests from one or more children for specific types of assistance (shifting power from teachers to children thus reducing potential of stigma).

Integrated skill learning.

In effective multi-level teaching, skills instruction is integrated into authentic learning activities. Additionally, we saw teachers drawing students aside or conducting whole class, short mini-lessons on specific skills needed to accomplish certain learning tasks. Teachers were careful that groups of students who needed assistance on a specific skill were not grouped on an ongoing basis for skill instruction but that composition of the groups varied.

Focus on meaning and function: *Themes and more.*

Authentic multi-level instruction most centrally focuses on learning, information, skills that have meaning in the lives of students. We observed many strategies toward this end:

- Helping students to make connections between text readings and stories and their own lives,
- Designing projects in which students explore the lives of their parents, families, or neighborhood.
- Involving students in investigating real world issues, whether local or far away, and engaging in dialogue and decision-making,
- Organizing large blocks of time around thematic studies, guiding students in helping to select themes for study, developing webs that broke a particular topic into many related subunits.

Building on the strengths of all children.

In effective multi-level classes, students are celebrated for their strengths, at whatever level they are functioning. In one third grade class, the students were excited on our first day of observation to explain the 'advanced groups' in their class. We feared that we would find ongoing ability grouping instituted. However, we were delighted when students began to explain the various advanced groups – reading, writing, math, humor, dancing, and more. Every student in the room was part of an 'advanced group' of their own self-assessment and selection that represented a personal strength.

Multi-modal.

We also saw effective teachers providing many options by which students might both obtain information and demonstrate their learning, using many strategies to respond to diverse learning styles; for example, different colored chalk for each assignment; Friday enrichment groups based

on the seven intelligences; matching tasks to student interests and learning styles. Such multi-modal processes are used flexibly and naturally, rather than assigning students to groups through rigid assessments of particular intelligences, interests or other characteristics.

Student leads a classroom meeting in inclusive 1st grade classroom.

Fostering respect in communicating with children.

We were particularly taken with the way in which effective teachers talked with students. At the minimum, effective teachers did not yell at or belittle students. Even in difficult situations, they talked with students in a respectful way, helped students obtain information and make choices, used their own power while sharing power with students in multiple ways.

Student interests, meaningful choices, power, and voice.

In effective instruction, teachers used many strategies and tools on a minute-by-minute basis to make sure children had their voices heard, and to assure them that their opinions matter and their work is respected. Children have many ways to express their opinions, participate in class discussions, write, act, draw, and express their inner thinking. Teachers help children to develop a 'voice' that is uniquely theirs.

Students were offered choices of activities that drew on areas of strength. They were given support, information, encouragement, and guidance in making choices, and were also allowed to say "no." One teacher told a contrasting story of a high school teacher in another school who said to his class: "I am going to teach and you can stay if you want or leave if not." This non-choice was an expression of teacher power without any countervailing respect for students.

Collaborative leadership and learning.

In effective Authentic Multi-level Instruction, students provide leadership and mutual assistance to one another in the learning process. Students are explicitly and systematically taught to help, support, and challenge one another as part of building community in their classroom. They are taught how to judge 'just right work' and expected to do this work, but are also provided genuine choices and assistance in learning how to take responsibility for choices. In this way, students learn to help each other in learning at their own levels. Regardless of individual ability levels, all students are encouraged, expected by their peers to do work that can be described as "personal best."

Reflection and learning.

Students in effective classrooms were constantly engaged in reflection on their own learning. Teachers would gather students into groups and ask them questions that called for open-ended, reflective responses, rather than questions calling for a 'right answer'. This occurred individually, in small groups, and as part of whole class instruction. Students were taught to use a critical, reflective stance in all of their work. In our observations, this approach was effective in helping to deepen understanding and enhance memory. Such approaches deepened the authenticity of the task as students often related their studies to their own lives, feelings, opinions, and perspectives.

Growth and effort-based evaluation.

Assessment, evaluation, and grading issues are complex. The best practices that we saw recognized children's accomplishment not solely based on a standard for grade-level work, but with a focus on the effort and progress of individual students. This meant that some students functioning far below grade level were seen as making excellent progress, while some other students functioning well above grade level, were seen as making little progress. Student-led conferences were one excellent way used to deal with demonstration of learning and growth using individual goal setting, portfolios, and alternative assessment.

Teaching Strategies and Authentic Multi-level Instruction (AMI)

We now describe key teaching strategies that we saw based on the principles of Authentic Multi-level Instruction. These descriptions are preliminary and need further development through intensive work with teachers. However, it is clear that Authentic Multi-level Teaching as an overall philosophy and teaching approach is possible: it is being practiced by a reasonable number of exemplary teachers.

Levels Of Learning Goals And Activities

Although this has not yet been done formally, the teachers we studied developed ways of articulating learning goals, activities, and performance measures for students with differing levels of ability. While we saw no teacher engage in planning in a formalized way, these teachers had clear goals for all of their students that took into consideration, among other factors, differing levels of ability. Most teachers started by thinking of goals for their highest ability students, then their lowest ability students, then students in the middle. Sometimes they started with interesting and challenging learning activities first, then identifying or working in specific

5th grade students illustrate a story in an inclusive class.

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academic goals. Several teachers used this type of planning when making sure that district curriculum goals and learning objectives for a particular grade level or subject were being thoroughly integrated into their instructional plans.

Learning activities allowed use of differing levels of instructional materials as well as different levels of the demonstration of learning, most often involving (a) work in groups on meaningful tasks taking roles where they can function at different levels of ability or (b) work alone or in pairs on related tasks at differing levels of ability. Most teachers had a general scheme of levels of goals, reflecting the make-up of their individual classrooms. A level one learning goal, designed for students whose abilities are the most limited, would involve the simplest type of learning associated with a concept. A level two goal focuses on the academic skills achievable by most students in the class. A level three goal involves deeper engagement, introducing greater complexity in the activity itself, in the thought processes required for the target performance or outcome, and/or in the breadth or depth of the concept being explored.

Figure VI.3-3: Multiple Levels Of Learning Goals and Activities

Example from "Going to the Extremes" – Jason Project

Learning Goals *Learn . . .*	**Multi-level roles in the learning activity.** ***Do . . .***
Level 3. Teamwork and leadership skills Measurement Methods to record multiple data Compare results of data from two different sources Develop an analysis report.	**Level 3.** Leadership in organizing the team and solving problems. Recording data. Helping the team to compare their results with the scientist. Writing an analysis report.
Level 2. Learn how to work as a team, plant seeds, record growth, and write simple conclusions.	**Level 2.** Plant seeds Record plant growth Describe conclusions in journal.
Level 1. Help set up materials, work in a team, and do basic recording of the responses of the plant.	**Level 1.** Help set up materials. Draw picture of plant each day.

This chart illustrates levels of learning goals and activities of an interactive science unit through the Jason Project. The chart also illustrates how different subjects may be tied together.

The chart below illustrates an example of how one 3-5 multi-age teacher articulated learning goals and activities at three different levels of ability for a single activity. She did not develop a formal chart herself; we constructed the chart, which we reviewed with her, based on observations and conversations. The three levels are illustrative only; teachers might easily have a different number of levels or different characterizations of any given level. However, the chart does illustrate the thinking of many teachers.

Finally, note that in this example, the learning activities do not imply that the students are doing different activities or are working in groups clustered by ability. Rather the activity involves a group working together, with students of differing abilities having roles within the group that match their goals.

4th grade inclusive teacher helps student select a 'just right' book to read.

Curriculum and authentic multi-level teaching.

How does a teacher organize instruction so that students with vastly different ability levels are able to work together when teachers are under a great deal of pressure to 'cover' subjects? Teachers at all grade levels are challenged by the need to accommodate the wide ranges of abilities in their classes. In inclusive classrooms, the challenge increases in the middle and high schools because the gap widens between students with mental retardation, for example, and students at the middle to high levels of academic ability.

The exemplary teachers we observed studied their district's curriculum guidelines and organized the wide range of skills around a few authentic themes or topics. For example, one upper elementary, multi-age teacher took the district math curriculum and organized it around four key skill areas. Similarly, this same teacher looked across science, social studies, and literacy guidelines and developed a few thematic topics that linked many of the specific areas of focus. This allowed her instruction to be authentic, allowed students to 'cover' required skills and information, but also organized instruction in such a way that students could work on engaging projects and function at their own levels while learning together.

Authentic multi-level learning strategies.
Open-ended projects with multiple levels of output.

Framing the purpose and requested outputs of learning activities is critical for developing multi-level lessons. The best teachers we observed framed questions clearly but at the same time involved complex levels of thinking. For example:

- Read 'just right' books in reader's workshop using tools to help you strengthen your understanding – web maps, summaries of key ideas, characters, and story line.
- Write a letter to the President of the United States discussing an important issue your class has been discussing.
- Develop a model that shows me how a habitat functions.
- Let's talk about and then write about how chickens develop in an egg and what happens when they hatch? How do chickens operate as a group?

Each of these tasks asks students to respond at a higher level on Bloom's taxonomy. However, multiple levels are possible through varying the difficulty of materials used, and the amount and nature of the work required for the development of products that demonstrate learning.

Figure VI.3-4: Strategies For Multi-Level Teaching

LITERACY	SCIENCE	MATH	SOCIAL STUDIES
Choice of books at different levels. Buddy reading. Read-alouds. Individual writing goals. Stick-figure drawing to write a story line Individual spelling lists. Writing poetry	Experiments with different group roles identified. Note-taking by graphic organizers like webbing Informational reading at many levels. Heterogeneous work groups help each other with assignments	Math games Learning groups based on student interest and readiness. Math projects with multiple types of tasks and levels to choose from. Whole class interest related community projects. Heterogeneous practice groups	Projects that allow students different roles. Dramatic role-play of social and historical situations. Write songs, poems, stories, etc. that show learning. Involve local people with interviews, visits, and projects.
❑ Art to convey meaning. ❑ Choice of inquiry project at differing ability levels. ❑ Partial participation in learning activities. ❑ Cooperative learning groups (with differing levels of activities to contribute to the total group).		❑ Support and scaffolding to provide assistance in completing activities not possible independently. ❑ Student-led portfolio conferences. ❑ Pair-Share information ❑ Heterogeneous partners for projects. ❑ Students choose own topics within broader theme	

Whole group instruction.

In whole group instruction, teachers using AMI once again engage students in higher levels of thinking, rather than relying on the more typical lower level activities. Rather than the traditional 'bell work' at the beginning of the day, for example, students are given one of several choices of open-ended work.

In read alouds, important at all ages, the teacher selects materials at the level of higher functioning students. The teacher will have the class discuss the book, predict what is may be about from title, discuss the author, stop and reflect with the class on certain passages, all to deepen understanding of all students and scaffold the understanding of those with lower abilities.

In projects that involve individual or small group work, teachers bring the class together at various points. The project is often discussed first with the whole group and the whole group reconvenes later to share progress and discuss issues that have arisen. Final products may also be shared with the whole class, using a variety of methods. Throughout whole group phases of an activity, the teacher asks probing questions, summarizes and reflects students answers back to them, attending to both cognitive and emotional communications, allowing understanding to build and students to communicate in their own words. In other words, whole group time is key for having both teacher and students providing scaffolding to assist students in making genuine progress.

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Individual learning activities.

If projects are individual, students can be both allowed and encouraged to help one another. As students learn that all are to work at 'just right' work, some will challenge higher functioning students to do more while simultaneously providing help and support for students functioning at lower levels of ability. All students may use resources at differing levels and produce products that range dramatically in complexity and sophistication.

Pairs and small groups.

If projects involve pair or group work, the work can be divided so that students functioning at differing levels can take roles that fit their abilities and learning goals. Once again, as students are expected to do 'just right' work and to help each other in the process. If the teacher supports the group process, students themselves can work out their individual roles. When the teacher is careful not to group by ability or cluster students with higher and lower skills in the same groups, she can insure that groups feel neither penalized nor superior in comparison to other groups in the class.

In evaluating student performance in group work, teachers take into account the degree of effort from each individual student, as well as the individual level of growth and understanding that has been demonstrated. Typical grade level standards can be used as benchmarks but individual students are essentially compared to themselves.

Mini-lessons for skill development.

Teachers using AMI identify students who have similar skill needs through observations of their work, and call a group together during workshop time when the class is busy with projects. Sometimes the teacher announces that there will be a mini-lesson on a skill and invites all students who want help in that area to attend. The teacher might then quietly ask others to join, pointing out that she noticed they were struggling in this area and thought they would find the mini-lesson helpful. When the teacher can show a specific place in important work where this skill is needed, the children tend to be interested in learning the designated skill and choose to join the mini-lesson. In this process, they learn the valuable skill of assessing their own work and learning needs. Often more students will choose to join the mini-lesson than anticipated by the teacher. The skill can be anything from choosing 'just right' books to borrowing in subtraction. Any child, from the strongest to those who struggle, could find a particular mini-lesson needed within the context of a given activity or project.

Teacher-student conferencing.

Exemplary teachers we observed conducted individual reading, writing, and spelling conferences during workshop time, as students were working on individual, pair, or group projects. This helped the teacher focus on what students were learning, identify the need for mini-lessons and identify the children who needed them, and allowed time for note-taking about students' progress, strategies, and interests. The teachers had children keep journals in which they recorded their thinking about books and school topics. This writing was used to facilitate discussion groups and provided insight into student learning while helping them think about what they are reading.

Problems and Issues in Authentic Multi-level Teaching.

Too often, teachers rely on practices that insure that some children will be lost or bored. These common practices that insure the failure of instruction for many children in the class include:

- Using textbooks as the center of instruction, rather than trade books and other materials at differing levels of difficulty.
- Using worksheets that involve one-level work at the lower stages of Blooms' taxonomy, typically fill-in-blank or multiple choice questions that stress convergent, low level thinking, rather than using authentic materials and projects with worksheets used to provide open-ended prompts and to focus thinking.
- Grouping students by global assessment of 'ability' rather than insuring that membership in pairs and groups is heterogeneous.
- Relying on one-level demonstrations of learning via tests, particularly short answer tests, rather than allowing and encouraging demonstrations that draw on multiple intelligences using variety of types of products.

Below, we provide some examples of multi-level instruction that occurred in our school observations.

Reading and writing workshop in an intentional classroom community. *Young children learning the language of community and the skills of reading in authentic learning activities.*

Sandra is a grade1-2 multi-age teacher. She works very hard with her students to build a sense of community in the classroom, a place where students make decisions about, and take ownership of, their learning. This is a short, but revealing anecdote from Sandra's class.

> It is now time for 'reader's workshop'. She checks the status of the class. "Twombe, you were doing Mr. Brown. Have you done a review, a conference, or a project paper? What are you doing today?" He is going to choose a new book, which she wants to listen to. She sets the timer. "We're waiting on you, Roy." She says to a student at the back door to the classroom, "Blanca, you were doing, This is the Way. Have you done a project paper on it?" Blanca doesn't know and Sandra asks her to go find out. "If you can't find your project paper then you need to do one." She continues

this way through all the kids as they wait for her. As she finishes with each student, he or she leaves and go to work. Some are reading. Some are doing a review using a yellow sheet where they record name of the book, author, summary of what it was about, why they liked it, a 1-5 rating of the book, and sign their name.

Sandra assesses where the children are in the reading workshop process by asking the children what they are doing, and works with the children on an individual basis as is necessary to further her knowledge of their reading development. The children make choices about what they will read, and how they will respond to what they have read. Each child is reading a different book By allowing the children to make decisions about what they will read, Sandra has given each child the opportunity to work at their own level and their own pace.

> During this time Sandra is at her semi-circular desk in the middle of the room conferencing with individual students. She is now with Roy, working on his individual spelling list. There is a hum of noise as the kids are reading aloud to themselves. She uses Roy's daily notebook (a small spiral notebook that they write messages back and forth to each other) and his 'learning log' (a blue type book in which he writes about activities in the class). She looks these over and finds words that he was close to getting correct. These become his spelling words.

This teacher knows what is a "just right" book for each student, what is too easy, and what is too hard. The key to making this work is teaching her students strategies to make appropriate choices. They do not depend on her to decide for them. In reading, they follow the five finger rule. If a student wants to read a book, he first reads the first page. He puts one finger up every time he misses a word. If he misses two to four words, the book is just right. More than four words means the book is too hard right now (maybe later) and missing less than two means the book is too easy. Children learn how to choose work that is challenging and yet lets them feel successful. Once students learn the technique, this method allows them to work at individual levels even though a teacher does not have time to choose for them for every single task. In addition, the students learn a valuable skill. As for specific instruction on strategies and skills, Sandra addresses those in small groups or individual conferences in the context of real work.
Hatching chickens, multi-level teaching, and building community in a first grade class: *How they all come inextricably together.*

Shelley is a first grade teacher. She teaches with a very gentle manner. The following observation occurred after the class's chick eggs were lost when the incubator was disturbed and got too warm. The class is now discussing the possibility of getting new eggs.

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Shelley talks about hatching eggs and testing them for freshness. She needs to clean the incubator and will invite the attendance taker [classroom job assignment] to help.

Shelley tells the class she can get new eggs today. If she gets chicks, they will hatch over spring break. Or she could just get duck eggs, which would hatch after break. One of the kids' moms has agreed to take the eggs home and handle the hatched chicks if necessary.

Kids decide what to do. Shelley invites kids' opinions. Says they should think more, and then vote. She discusses the length of time they can keep hatched chicks in the classroom before taking them back to the farm. Says that they get too smelly as they get bigger - can maybe keep them two days. Shelley asks two kids to go to the media center to write up the pros and cons of the various choices and to write up their recommendations.

Shelley has taken the problem of the un-hatched eggs and presented to the class to solve, rather than making decisions and solving it herself. She presented all the options to the children, gave them thinking time, and discussed other aspects of keeping the chicks in the room. This is a teachable moment and Shelley has used it to allow students to practice their problem-solving skills. It is very meaningful to the children because the eggs are something they have a very strong interest in. It is a real, concrete problem they are solving. Shelley also gave the task of writing the pros and cons and coming up with recommendations to a few students, rather than making the recommendations herself. Through this discussion, she is giving students ownership over a class decision.

Kids who researched egg problem report. Both propose that Shelley get duck eggs today and chicken eggs next Thursday. This will allow all eggs to hatch after break. A brief digression into the names for mom/dad/baby duck/chicken/goose.

Kids get very wiggly. Shelley proposes a "movement to get the jiggles out of our bodies." She tells kids to make sure all chairs are pushed in for safety - attendance taker does this. Shelley puts on tape. The children move based on what the words to the song tell them to do: walk/gallop/tiptoe/run/skate/hop.

Shelley recognizes the students need to move around, and is willing to interrupt their discussion for a moment in order to meet that need.

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She understands the discussion may not progress as needed if the students become increasingly wiggly.

> Then return to egg problem. Kids are not persuaded by the reporters and vote to get all the eggs today, even though chicks will hatch over break. They then compromise and agree Shelley should get more eggs on Thursday so they can have some that hatch in the classroom. They also decide to ask the other teacher if they can "borrow" two chicks today or tomorrow so that they can have baby chicks right now. Shelley accepts all the kids' decisions and agrees to get the eggs, talk to the mom, etc.

In the end, the children make a decision through compromise based on their discussions. Shelley participated in the discussion and provided the students with the options, but left the final decision up to the children, and accepted the decision when it was made.

Linking social-emotional learning, staff collaboration, and academic skills in a major, authentic project. *Multi-level learning across the disciplines.*

Julie, a third grade teacher this year, is very excited about a collaborative project that has engaged the students in working together as a team and has provided lots of opportunities for learning at multiple levels. She wanted to help her kids *learn to cooperate and help one another* and spurred this on through preparation for a play about dinosaurs to be presented to the whole school. She wanted to promote desire among the students to be helpful to one another. The project ended up involving multiple collaborations with staff throughout the school.

- Ruby, the school psychologist, came into the class and did lessons on working together as a team. Ruby and Julie collaborated on this effort.
- The class decided to do a play about dinosaurs. They read a book about a dinosaur and Julie rewrote this into a play.
- Students made costumes. Julie sent a note home asking that the students make their own.
- The librarian helped the students pick out books related to dinosaurs.
- The art teacher had them do related art projects.
- The students enlarged shapes using the transparencies and the overhead projector to make props for the play.

Julie made videotapes of the earlier, less organized work, and of later, improved work. She planned to show the tapes to the students to help them see how they had become more skilled in group processes.

Authentic projects in a comfortable community. *Individualized learning for all as just part of the way teaching occurs.*

Dinah is a third grade teacher. She is known as a "very laid-back" teacher who supports student involvement in engaging activities within a supportive classroom community. The following observation of her classroom was made at the end of the school year.

The students are in a group and the teacher has a comfortable conversation with them about what they need to get done in the final 7 days of school. They list memory books, stories, buildings, and fractions. She asks each student where he or she is. She asks kids where they are in making their buildings - they all answer.

Dinah has facilitated the creation of a classroom environment where the students can be and are at different places with their learning, working on activities and projects at their own level and own pace. She gives each student an opportunity to share where they are on their own projects, letting them share their own assessments of themselves.

They start with working on their buildings - post office, Baptist church, cemetery, etc. - constructions of cardboard and wood. They are using tools.

Dinah tells me that they did reports on different historical buildings in Valley View and produced poster boards for each with text and pictures. They then are using cardboard boxes, wood, etc. to construct replicas that they will display in their own town's Historical Fair. She and another third grade teacher are doing this together. They received training via a six weeks training on technology and education offered by the Intermediate School District and were given a kit that has tools of various sorts that the students are using in the class.

The students are working on a project that is both authentic and meaningful. They were given choices in their learning: what historical building in the town they would research and create a physical representation of, how they would present the information they learned, and what materials they would use to create their physical representation of the historic site. Because the sites the students chose were in the city in which most of the students live, this project helped give the students a deeper understand of the history of their city. The students are working on a variety of different sites, demonstrating their ability to choose a site of interest to them. Additionally, the students are using real materials and tools to build their three-dimensional replicas and accompanying the model with poster board presentations.

After the students have completed this project, they will be experts on their chosen historical site, and will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge at the town's Historical

Fair. This method of demonstrating their knowledge tells both the teacher and families much more about what the children have actually learned than would a pencil and paper test.

We walk in and the kids are all at their desks clustered in groups of four. Dinah is explaining that "tonight is curriculum night, we are going to write something to our parents or whoever is coming, and they will write back to you." She shows them the basic format of a letter using the overhead projector and has them write: "Dear mom and dad (or mom or dad or grandmother, whoever is coming), Thank you for coming to curriculum night." "When you are done your pencil can be down on your desk," she tells them

Dinah asks who did what correctly. "What are some things you could say about school, your classroom? "Ruth?"

[Various suggestions are offered.] "I hope you like our class? Did you see the poem on our locker? I hope you find my picture. You think I am the smartest person in the class?"

Dinah asks, "What are a few more things? Let's think of a few more things. This letter needs to be a little long." They talk more. "How do we end the letter?" They talk options. "You have about 20 minutes to work on your letter. Remember, the longer your letter is the more you will have to write." Dinah circulates through the room helping kids.

Understanding geography through hands-on construction. *Partner work in exploring layers of the earth.*

Melanie is a young third year teacher teaching a grade 3-5 multi-age class. She has two students who, "in another school," would be labeled as emotionally impaired and several who would typically be labeled as learning disabled. However, she only has two children officially identified as special education students, one with a learning disability and another student, whose initial label was trainable mental impairment, but whose improved functioning has shifted his disability category to educable mental impairment. She has been intentionally learning about building community and multi-level teaching, experimenting as she goes. She does lots of project-based work, reading and writing workshop, and other teaching strategies aimed to promote multi-level learning.

Today students are working on a project to explore the layering of the crust of the earth.Students began to get organized to work on an on-going science project about the structure of the earth. Students had previously worked in pairs and made models of the earth with colored modeling clay, one color for the inner core, one for the outer core, and one for the mantle. The crust was blue and green, with blue representing water and green representing landmasses. The models were sitting on a counter and did not have identifying labels.

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Melanie went over the instructions for this activity several times and then began holding up models and asking students to come claim their own. She made a large number of management statements during this period, directing specific students to adjust their behavior in specific ways. Nonetheless, the distribution proceeded in an orderly way and there was surprisingly little difficulty in matching the models to student teams.

My mom's mom.

My mom's mom is friendly and kind.
She helps people all the time.
She loves our family day and night.
She supports us with all her might.
When times are tight she helps us out.
With support and caring from within her heart.
My mom is like her in so many ways.
She helps us each and every day.

She provided a plastic knife to each team and suggested that they either simply slice the model in half, or that they cut out a quarter section, whichever seemed easier to the team. She reminded the students to work gently so as not to squash their globes.

Once teams started to get their models sliced open – not such an easy task – they all seemed to be amazed by the appearance of the cross-section. Many teams wanted to show me their globes, explain the maps on the surface, show how you can put it together so that you can only see the crust and then open it up to reveal the inside, and tell me about the whole activity. Enthusiasm for this project seemed universal.

Rather than simply viewing pictures of the earth's layers, this activity involved students in a concrete way. Kevin, the student labeled cognitively impaired, had worked with a partner in this activity. Students who want to pursue this project further are encouraged to do so.

I want to be in your class because you give cool homework!! *Multi-level homework that is fun for parents and children alike.*

Melanie began her teaching career four years ago, giving the typical worksheets as homework. She decided fairly quickly, however, that this was just busy work and not very helpful for getting to enjoy learning. She thought and thought, and began to experiment with homework projects that would be interesting, provide many options for students, engage them in meaningful thinking, and allow parents and children to work together in enjoyable ways.

We are standing in the hall outside Melanie's classroom, looking at a display of different-looking work of children. We discover that these are homework projects the students have been presenting in class over the last few days. Melanie explains that students do projects over a three week period of time, and then present them in class where they can share and other students can ask questions. She shows us a few of the projects.

In the homework projects, the kids had some choices. "We were learning about heroes and explorers and all that is tied together in a thematic unit in our class. They were to interview a person about that person's hero and to share the information with

someone else, not the person they interviewed, before they presented the project in class. I got a note back from the person with whom they shared. One student did a puppet show; another produced a video (so these are not up on the wall)."

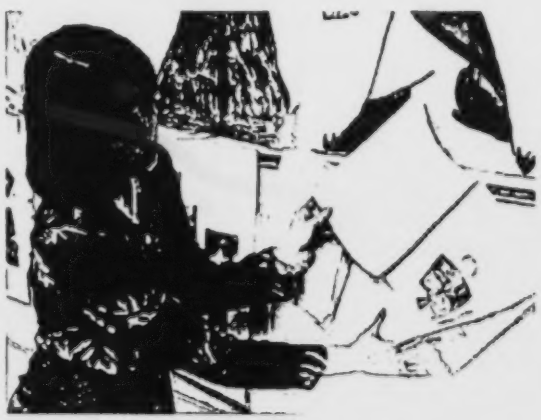
"This little boy interviewed his older brother," she says, pointing to a poster on the wall. His older brother's hero is Jackie Robinson so he tried to find similar pictures. For example, Jackie Robinson meeting a famous person and his brother meeting a famous person; Jackie Robinson's baby picture and his brother's baby picture. The poster is filled with pictures of the boy's brother and Jackie Robinson.

"This project was symbolic," she says, pointing to a poster that has at its top the words: 'leader, teacher, better person, and friend.' Symbols related to each of these words are aligned in columns. Each of the words represents a core theme arising from and interview with the student's mother. Pointing to two pages of handwritten materials, she explains, "These are facts about his mother that he showed us and read at the same time. This is just an amazing amount of writing for this student! I was very proud of him."

"This is one of my younger students," says Melanie as she shows a "book with words and beautifully done pictures about her aunt who is a photographer. She showed her how to take and develop pictures. For the project, they took a picture of a sea lion and developed it together," she explains pointing to a photograph in the child's book.

"For this child," she says laughing, "the kids at first thought he was doing it wrong because on the first page he describes *his* hero. However, if we look on we find information about his person's hero. He actually did more of a project that I assigned!" She shows the draft in handwriting that the student "wrote before he typed it out." He has pictures of his mother and himself and he told us about each of the pictures.

Two of my students wanted to write a poem. We have been studying this in class. He really wanted to do this so he and his dad sat and thought of a number of rhyming words. When I talked with his dad on the phone he laughed and sad that his son would start, not like this word, start over, really trying to get it just right. It was about his mom. Here is the poem.



In schools, a major source of frustration for children, parents, and teachers alike is homework. Somehow, a culture has developed that says that children should be asked to do repetitive practice of routine work at home, all on the same level. Some students breeze through, others struggle for hours, still others simply lose it.

Projects like Melanie's turn homework into fun that promotes deeper learning, thinking, creativity, and enjoyable activities between children and adults in the home. The teacher is careful not to require such adult

collaboration since children cannot be responsible for adult performance, but she encourages this with her students. She is also careful not to assign a project that will not be allotted a reasonable amount of time for classroom sharing.

Advanced placement: *Individual contracts in high school.*

In one high school in our study, students wishing for advanced placement work take an independent study class. Students select their one project and sign a contract that describes what they will study and accomplish to demonstrate learning. The students self-select to be in this class, so they know they have to be able to be responsible for the work. This makes "advanced placement" available to all students, rather than reserving it only for the most academically able students. Students who make advanced placement contracts may or may not also elect to sit for the formal advanced placement tests.

Horticulture: *Hands on learning for all students together.*

In another high school, the horticulture class provides substantive opportunities for students at differing levels of ability to learn together. The teacher explains "we think of this as a science class-science of plants, with a twist about how we use plants in everyday life and in the job world." In the class, students do landscaping and operate a flower shop and greenhouse.

Flowers that you wear is topic today. Students are making corsages for homecoming. The teacher had placed directions on the overhead projector and students were to outline the following: chapter 14, guidelines of design, themes and style, and proportion and scale. They were to divide up, some make corsages to sell, some making bouquets for the homecoming court. Jessica, a student with severe multiple disabilities, joined the class with a student pushing her wheelchair. Another student approached to greet her. Art, the teacher, walked around helping students write outlines as did Bill, the special education co-teacher.

Reading group presentations and student-based grading.

Jennifer, a fifth grade teacher, has students take a story and read it in sections. As students complete a book, they prepare a presentation for the class about it. Each section has basic instructions. At the end of the week, the children have a whole class discussion, using their journals, in which they have recorded information and reactions to the book. They choose books and all do a predictions worksheet. They write down a journal topic related to the story, and a word and what it means.

The class is divided into groups, literature circles, for discussion of the books. Each group has a leader, who is in charge of grading and the management of the group. The leader grades

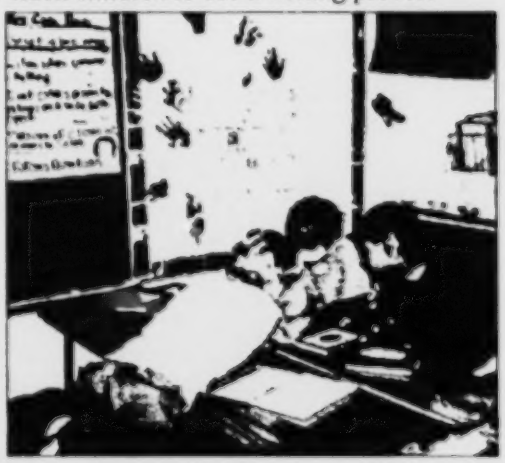
other students on a numerical scale, 1-3, based on a rubric. Each week, the leader changes so all have the opportunity to lead. Students with lower abilities also lead the group, partnered with another student, and participate fully within the group. Each group has a folder that has a list of comprehension questions that the leader asks the group.

Children write story and illustrate.

In Nora's grade 1-3 multi-age class, students write about topics at their own level, either through illustrations or words. The goal is allowing each child the opportunity to complete with success. She did not explicitly say to children, 'for you I have this objective' but had them write at their level, working at their developmental levels in their writing. This allows students to

- Learn to express personal experience.
- Sequence events
- Work on perfecting individual skills and not expecting the same from all.

Teachers can assess students while they are working in order to guide instruction. This also allows ongoing projects and cross-age tutoring. They teach children to use a writing process involving peer editing. The teacher may assist students in editing, depending on their ability levels. For assessment, the teacher has an "internalized rubric" she tries to get students to also carry in their heads. As students work, she goes around checking to see on where students are in their working. A first grader or lower functioning student may take longer for a simpler product than older or more able students, who work their product through to publishing. Students' work is compiled into a laminated classroom book, which provides authentic purpose for their writing. A student with a severe multiple disabilities worked with a partner, who asked yes/no questions to help her write her own contribution to the book.



Four seasons mask and skit.

A grade 3-5 multi-age teacher had students make masks they would use in a skit they created that illustrated the four seasons. In their skit, they were expected to mention specific items including the tilt of the earth, locations of the sun and moon, and so forth. Groups with intentionally mixed ability levels worked together on this project.

Experimenting for understanding.

One teacher liked to give students experiments of various sorts. Their goal was to discover what works, what does not, and why. Students recorded data in a science log. The experiments

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are set up so that all children can succeed. This discovery approach is motivating, allows a place for students with a wide range of abilities, and deepens understanding.

As one example, the class was studying energy and electricity. The teacher gave the students a bag with a battery, light bulb, and wire. Their task was to make the light bulb come on and draw a picture of what worked and what did not. In another situation, the teacher gave students a nail, wire, battery, and battery holder. They were to create an electromagnet and see how many paper clips it held. He had them change one variable, using the opportunity to discuss what a variable is. The goal was to understand the concept of variable and the process of experimentation: problem, experiment, and conclusion. The class had a huge discussion about errors and how some had contradictory results. Was the cause an old battery or other something else?

In this fourth grade class, students function at first grade through eighth grade level. They work as partners in the experiments. Students are helping and teaching one another in this process. As one group makes a discovery, they share with one another group, discussing what is happening, creating new ways to experiment, and discussing outcomes and process with one another. All felt successful and equal partner in what was clear learning community.

Math Journal.

One first grade teacher had students keep math journals where they recorded math work on different topics of interest to them. For example, she would daily have students take the day of the week and make math problems using the numbers. For example, if it is the 27th the student could figure ways to create the number 27through addition and other calculations. Students enjoyed this task and it allowed them to play with numbers involving very differing levels of ability. She commented that "most students grew a lot from doing work on their own", such as these math journals, "and not direct instruction".

Personal scrapbook.

In a third grade class, the teacher had each child good make a book of what is important to them. They added things all year long, whenever they wanted to. The teacher allowed the children to take control and decide what went in the book. The teacher developed a rubric that asked students to explain reasons why they selected certain items. The purposes of this activity were to help students reflect on their personal history, select and share information, and gain insight into self and others. This project was very open-ended. The students had responsibility, with support, to create the scrapbook. They could also take it home, and parents were encouraged to add to the book as well.

This project was fit the authentic and multilevel criteria very well. Some students had two pages of work, a great accomplishment for them, where others had many, many pages of sophisticated text and drawings. Students were able to share what was important to them, helping them to get to know one another. One child produced an amazing book almost completely independently. Some other students required much help and support.

Students write goals for themselves.

Several teachers we observed had students develop their own individual learning goals. In one case, these were developed as part of student-led conferences. Goals could be related to grades, writing, behavior, or other areas. The teacher would go over each report card with each child, explaining why the grade was given. Children then set goals for the next marking period. Their plan for success was very specific and goals were taken seriously. The goals were then discussed when the next report cards come out. Students assessed whether they failed or succeeded in meeting their goals. Children were taught to make feasible goals for themselves, setting them up for success. The goals went home, as well as staying in their desks and with the teacher. First graders spent significant time talking about the goals and met twice a week in heterogeneous groups to help keep the goals in mind and relate them to ongoing activities. They helped each other in their goals. Beyond promoting multi-level instruction, this technique helped build community, improve social skills, and encourage self-reflection.

Demonstrating Learning.

We observed teachers providing ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding at several levels, in many cases providing students choices regarding how they might demonstrate learning. Most assessment was based on the student's production of authentic learning activities: reading real books at his or her own level, producing a range of materials (drawing, building a model, writing a song or reflective poem content, writing real stories, or participating in a student developed play) that demonstrate deep understanding of the content as well as skill in producing the product. All these authentic assessment strategies allow students to demonstrate learning at their own levels without creating different tests for every child in the class

Learning to set limits is a process that every person must be taught. While students choose, they teachers to follow up. Many teachers have systems for tracking student choices for different activities or projects. One teacher showed us a notebook with a tab for each child. In each student's section, a contract would be filled out for each book, writing assignment, or other task.

When teaching using multiple levels, teachers assessed students continually, to determine if students were being challenged at their level of success. When students were making choices that seemed too easy or too hard, the teacher discussed the choices with them. Did they stretch their abilities? Were they finishing too quickly? Given the proper support, students generally appeared to learn to make good choices.

Art and Inclusive Education
A Special Report

Mohammad Ali and other superheroes with collaged fabric clothes guard students' lockers. Nursery rhyme characters with paper plate heads dangle from the ceiling tiles: Rapunzel has long yellow yarn braids; Cinderella wears a cone shaped dress covered in blue satin and Little Red Riding Hood, a corduroy red cape. Framed student masterpieces proudly greet parents in the main hallway. Construction paper portraits announce membership in classrooms.

Like these examples, art is evident in most schools, whether or not the school has a formal art program. Bulletin boards and showcases are likely to show off student artwork that may have been produced in art class or in general education classes. Art is not specifically mentioned in Whole Schooling philosophy. It is implied, however, in the notion of multiple intelligence and instruction for diverse learners, and it is considered essential to the education and development of the "whole" student. Often, in the course of this study, students who had special education labels were reported to be creative and artistic and their art participation gave them joy as well as contributed to a sense of identity as an artist and not just a student with a disability.

All individuals, regardless of ability or talent, can learn and experience enjoyment through participation in the arts. For certain students, like Meadowview first grader Lavico whose IQ was assessed to be 60, art offered a venue outside academic subjects in which he could excel. Sometimes, students who have difficulty in academic subjects, whether or not they have special education labels, can be encouraged to persist in these academic subjects if they have the opportunity to participate in art, a subject in which they may be more comfortable and able. In other cases, students may learn visually or spatially and may benefit from their academic subjects being adapted to rely more heavily on these learning styles. Art classes (traditionally with more open-ended outcome requirements for assignments) have great potential as inclusive settings.

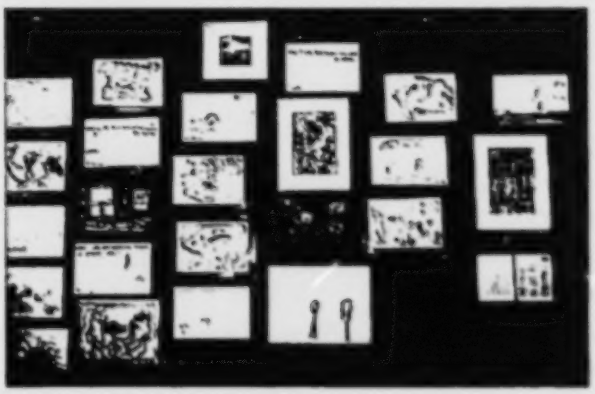
With one exception, the classrooms to which we were directed to observe inclusive teaching did not include art. At Rogers High School, the art program as well as the music program were both considered key classrooms for promoting the participation of students with multiple disabilities (the students in the "severely multiply impaired" classroom), and these classes were listed on the researchers' schedules of classroom observations. Whenever we requested to visit the art rooms in other schools, we were allowed to do so, and usually teachers were eager to show off their hard work. There were two minor exceptions: at Hamilton, the art teacher allowed us to visit but declined to answer any questions about her approach to integrating children with special needs into her classes. In addition, the art teacher at Evergreen Elementary did talk with us over the phone, but the times of our visits were not always good times, she explained, for us to observe the art classes.

Our analysis of classroom observations revealed over 200 references to art in instructional situations, suggesting that art was an area that was visible in the schools. Most of these references had to do with art activities that were taking place within the regular classroom at the time the observations were taking place.

All schools seemed to incorporate art materials or techniques into the curriculum in one or more ways. In all the elementary schools, art was used in various classes as a way to supplement or enhance the lesson, such as in coloring worksheets. In some classes, art had a more central role, as the modality through which the lesson was taught and learned. At Evergreen, for example, a social studies lesson about the core values of the school, consisted of students reading and acting out a scripted skit about "rules." In another Evergreen class, students were doing literature presentations. They dressed like a character from the books they had been assigned. Among the characters were Ang and Chang, the Siamese twins, hooked together with a belt and hiding beneath a skin-colored fabric. Another social studies example took place at Meadowview where students were learning about communities. Using the book, Me on the Map, students were to draw themselves in their rooms, their house on their street, their street in their neighborhood, etc. Additionally, "calendar math" at Meadowview and other elementary schools integrated concepts common to both art and math such as space, order, and class.

Center time is common in elementary instruction. In one Meadowview second grade class, one center focused on underwater fish. Each child was supposed to select a book on underwater fish, find a picture, and sketch the fish on a separate piece of paper with a pencil. This was to be a sketch for a color painting later on. At another table, there was button math. Here, a kit with buttons was used with a worksheets to sort buttons by type. At another table, children were still working on coloring a worksheet of George Washington Carver. One child who had finished the pencil sketch of the fish, painted the fish at the easel.

At Drummond High School, an English class assignment was to write poetry, and the ideas for poems were generated through finding magazine pictures that evoked feelings. Another high school example consisted of the dramatic murals that filled Rogers's halls. The murals started when one student classified as a special education student, wanted to paint a mural. He was allowed to do this and was given credit because he showed interest in this project. The mural was so well received he did a second mural. These murals were critical to this student's overall success in school. Following these two murals, additional murals were planned. They became central to the art curriculum and served as a way for students with a variety of needs to take part in a project together to benefit the school. Working on the mural together helped to achieve social skills and facilitated cooperative learning. The art teacher believed the murals also helped to contribute to the sense of community in the school, and that art in general was a way of reaching out to the larger community outside the school.



Art exhibit of the work of children in the schools of the Whole Schooling Research Project.

I reached out with the murals, and if city hall needed anything, I did that. Kiwanas needed a logo once, and the state adopted the logo. The student who worked on that really got a lot of attention.... The art program is respected.

Art teachers in Michigan teach a curriculum based on State Standards for Art Education. These standards include both art technique and art history. Elementary art teachers often attempt to cover an artist or a technique, showing examples or books. Children have a half-hour to work before cleaning up. Often a version of this same lesson is adapted to the different grade levels. Meadowview art teacher Arlene explained her approach to teaching art:

I want them to get exposure to each type of media. I put artists in there and culture in there, but also our school adopted the Jason Program for ocean and space. This year it was Hawaii. I adopted that as part of my curriculum. I also try to find out what teachers are doing in their classrooms. Second graders are working in their curriculum with community, so we made houses. March is reading month so I focused on illustrators. Some appreciate it; some just feel it is their planning time, so it goes both ways.

Some high schools have more than one art teacher, and some students enroll in a block scheduled art class. In one school, assignments were given and students worked at their own pace. They were free to use the computers and books in the art library for ideas. More often than not, they could be seen eating and gossiping during class time. In another high school, teachers often did more of a lecture-presentation or set up still-lifes to be painted or drawn. One elementary school in our study, Avery, actually emphasized art in the curriculum, named the art teacher the lead teacher, and offered art "specials" four times a week as well as "Art Centered Education."

A service-learning project illuminates the benefits of inclusion

One unique example of the use of art in elementary education was an after-school project that developed through a relationship with Tom, then principal at Meadowview. Terry was concerned that his students were destroying the bathrooms. A school-wide "bathroom basics" program to teach proper bathroom etiquette met with limited success. Tom wondered if art students from Wayne State University might come in and paint the walls so that they would look more beautiful and hopefully remedy the situation. A more structured service learning project ultimately materialized in which university students spent a semester working with Meadowview students specially selected by teachers to be ambassadors of the school, and painted murals in the bathrooms. This project was very well received by the teachers, parents, and students. Because the students who participated were nominated based on their need to have individual relationships with adults as demonstrated by their behavior or because of another need to have a "special project" to do, the mural painting was a unique example of how art contributed to the education of the whole student. Tom saw several benefits, beginning with the staff.

I think initially we saw a reaction from the staff that is very typical, we get so used in this society to thinking inside of a box about what's possible and not possible, and the faith that those kids could do it and that it would be wonderful to look at, you could really see the staff divide down the lines about who was a possibility thinker, who really believed in kids, who could support them in their own creative efforts. And once the paintings really began to take shape, there was a lot of surprise on the part of staff, and lots of surprise that some of those kids could be contributors to our school because many of the children in the project are not kids who have opportunities outside of the opportunity you gave them.

The second benefit noted by Tom was that parents were thrilled. Tom noted how several students insisted that their parents look at the bathrooms when they came into the school for other reasons. " We have lots of visitors here because we have interns, and everyone who comes here just couldn't believe it-- the parents think this is just one more thing that makes our school special. Other visitors have just raved about what a wonderful idea it was and how much better the bathrooms look."

"Third," he said, "I monitor the bathrooms, and I am seeing less of a mess. So I think it's making a difference for kids. The kids who did it are very proud and I mentioned their names and we will do something with a school-wide video."

The reports on the children's' behavior during the project were "surprising in some ways because I saw some behaviors from kids who I would not have expected to behave that way."

This was a small group of eleven children and several demonstrated severe behavioral problems during the course of the painting. The mural painting, thus, had an unexpected lesson with regard to inclusion: Tom continued,

I think part of the inclusion model says that these kids will perform better when they have positive peer pressure and in some regards we had children who because of the small group and because of the attention and because the peer pressure was not to perform, who just fell apart. And they were kids who easily in another building could be resource kids, you know that. They could be self-contained kids but they are holding themselves together. I was glad that we had a mix of kids, and didn't have kids that were all behavior problems. I think kids like Arthur and Lavico have just made huge strides. So those are the success stories and that is why inclusion works because … we see those kids able to do something.

Art teachers' experiences with inclusion

We began to think more about the role of art in inclusion when we heard one of the art teachers remark that students with special needs go to other classes with aides, yet they are "dumped" in art with the art teacher alone. This is the time for the aide to take a break. The specials' classes (usually art, music and physical education) were among the classes most frequently attended by students considered to be "in" special education. Several problems were associated with this practice. If students with special needs were included, the art teacher often was not informed prior to the student attending the class. When it became obvious that the

student had special needs, it was up to the art teacher to find out what the needs were by asking the classroom teacher or special education teacher for more information about the student. Many art teachers did not feel adequately prepared to respond to the learning needs or behavioral problems of students mainstreamed into their classes.

Furthermore, the art teachers began to notice the inequity in terms of how students with special needs were scheduled in art classes compared with how they were scheduled in academic classes. Art teachers noticed that students with special needs attended academic classes with aides, but that the aide did not attend the art class. Moreover, whereas the student might be the lone student classified as having special needs in a homeroom classroom, in art, there might be two or more students with different special needs, "mainstreamed" from a self-contained classroom, all for the art teacher to teach alone. No one bothered to consider what other students were being referred to the same art class. Unfortunately, this sometimes contributed to the feeling of the art teachers that they were not respected by their peers or the administration, as well as a resentment of the students with special needs themselves. Tammy, art teacher at Rogers High School reports,

> We get a high percentage of special ed kids in the classes. In my lowest class, there are 11 special ed kids in there, out of 32. So there is a high percentage—They are doing pretty well. Some of the others in the class are in AP classes or will be. Of the special ed kids, some days they can't remember the assignment, one is visually impaired, some can't do the classes, the assignments.

Ensuring the participation of the aides is not always the answer to the art teachers' problems with inclusion. Some aides in fact, were considered by the art teachers to be problematic, whether or not they came to the art class. Some aides did the artwork for the student; others just sat in class and did nothing. Because the art teachers did not feel it was their place to instruct the aides, nothing was said directly to the aides, and the resentment continued.

Sometimes, the art teachers were informed that students with special needs would be attending their classes and they sometimes were invited to attend the IEPs for these students. Yet, more often than not, the IEP was scheduled during the academic teacher's planning time, in which the students were scheduled to be in the art room. Despite the invitation, the art teacher could not attend the meeting. The logistical arrangements were even more complicated for art teachers who traveled to different schools. The ways in which to work with students with special needs are compounded for art teachers who have numbers of students with special needs at multiple schools.

Not all art teachers had reservations about working with students with special needs. In fact, they seemed to welcome this if their needs (that is, the needs of the art teachers) were better considered. What seemed most problematic was the art teachers' perception of inequity in how students with special needs were scheduled for art versus the academic classes, (specifically how many students were scheduled in one class at one time, and whether or not an aide should be present). Furthermore, the IEP team might think art was something that would meet the needs of the student, yet the art teacher was not represented in the IEP meeting to be informed about the students' needs or to have a voice in the placement of this student in the art room.

One high school art teacher seemed to work well with students with a variety of needs and abilities, leading me to suspect that the personality of the art teacher determined in large part how well inclusion was facilitated. This teacher stated:

I loved having special needs students. To me a public school is a cross section of society. If you don't expose students to others different from themselves so they can experience harmony and love for each other, how else will they learn that? How will they be able to get along with others in the world? —There are a lot of kids for whom their nurturing would come out when they were with kids different than themselves. Some of the kids with needs would go to the ones in class who were reclusive—like the girl who used to ram kids with her wheelchair. And that would be what I would want to do, kick them into some action, but she could do it! Society is really screwed up in terms of special needs. Like our building. The principal was not very open. … It's all in how you take it. I knew when I became an art teacher this is how it would be. Those who bitch and moan that they get dumped on with special needs kids, have other issues. I think, "What am I going to do to make it work?" Accept it and work it out.

Another art teacher echoed these sentiments,

They do a lot of helping each other out, it is really healthy to have different level students in the class and also some of the brand new kids coming in are better than some of the ones who are experienced.

Art teachers and academic teachers alike believed they could easily work with someone with a physical disability or even a learning disability, yet someone with an emotional problem had the potential to disrupt the entire class. One art teacher remarked,

I have had situations where a child was more disabled and walked with a brace. With that I didn't notice any difference, but with the kids who have emotional or behavior problems, obviously that kid takes up all your attention from the rest of the class. In that way, there are 25 kids and you are dealing with two. In one situation, the aide wasn't really an asset.

One art teacher described a situation in which he was verbally encouraged by the principal to work with students with special needs, however, this verbal support was not followed with consistent action--the principal seemed to say one thing and do another. The art teacher recalled scheduling the Alvin Ailey Dancers to perform at the school.

I sent invitations to all the specials teachers. One of the teachers said, "The principal said we weren't invited because of our student. She thought they shouldn't be there in case they made noise, but I thought, so what if they made noise? They came and they loved it! I get angry when more of that doesn't go on.

Another common dilemma had to do with the assigning of grades. According to one art teacher,

As far as grading, I have to make sure their work is based on their stick-to–it-ive-ness, their individual effort. It's hard to touch on all that is in the art education standards.

Another art teacher added:

> I just received an entry to the exhibit from a student who has Down syndrome. I thought, "How do I judge that? I can't compare artwork from a student who had Downs. For that student, I put everything up. I'd grade based on effort." I said, "as long as you try and I see you working you will get a B at least, and if you work or try a little harder you'll get an A." There are kids who are really talented who could pull an all-nighter and come up with something fantastic, but I encouraged everyone to work in class and show the consistent effort. I knew the student had Downs because the teacher called me. I had sent out flyers and one went to this school, it's a special school. She asked me if this included her students and I said, "absolutely!" Then my other thought was, "How can I make this fair? Contests are for 'the best.' We've set standards, but what are those standards? Are they standards for each student?

A third art teacher explained,

> Sometimes I have to modify things quite a bit, or if it didn't seem like I needed to, then I need to or if I find out that someone is just taking advantage and I know they are just not trying and they don't deserve a modification. Some of them work very slowly, some have a time barrier that could be difficult, I don't require as many assignments of some of them as I might of the other students. Most of them are appreciative of that. It's none of the other students' business who gets what assignment. I give letter grades, unless someone has requested a pass-fail. Usually that is from some of the more academically oriented kids who are wanting to blow off the class and are taking it as an elective. …

As for teachers of other subjects, the individual personalities and dispositions of the art teachers seemed to affect how well they were able to include students with special needs. The inclusion of students with special needs in art and other special subject area classes was very common, yet the success with which inclusion occurred was variable. Many art teachers were able to use their positions to structure inclusive environments in their classrooms where students would help each other out, and the range in self-expression was the norm. Other art teachers may be helped to do this when the system for inclusion is more considerate of the needs of the art teacher for additional classroom help or for treating the art teacher like a peer who should be an active member of any IEP team.

Ideally, structured art experiences in schools encourage children to: a) be creative, b) learn more about themselves as unique individuals through exploring their art, c) understand and express feelings that may hinder learning and that may be difficult to express verbally, d) develop sensitivity to and care for others through studying the art of different cultures, and e) learn academic subject matters through hands-on experiences. Structured art experiences in the schools have the potential to achieve the principles of Whole Schooling. As self-expression and self-awareness are fostered in art education and art therapy, individual students should become happier, more fully functioning citizens making positive contributions to society. In making art,

students learn craftsmanship, patience, sharing, and problem solving. They learn about themselves.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most significant finding and development from this project, is documentation of the importance of Authentic Multi-level Teaching, beginning to develop an outline of principles and practices. While our original hypothesis, that engaging instruction and designing instruction for diversity helped guide us in our selection of teachers and our reflection on teaching practices, it was the exemplary work of teachers themselves who daily use what we now call Authentic Multi-level Teaching practices who helped us understand what truly inclusive teaching could be like. The success we saw with students, the mutual respect built, the understanding of individual differences promoted in these classrooms was invigorating and instructive. While we have sketched strategies for authentic multi-level teaching, much needs to be done to investigate this broad approach in greater detail, connecting with professional teaching standards of the national professional educational organizations, creating more detailed examples and guidelines across grade levels and educational disciplines.

WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

VI.5 SUPPORT FOR LEARNING IN AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

KEY FINDINGS

Support by adults is most effective when it occurs in the general education classroom and assists the general education teachers both in developing effective, authentic, multi-level instruction for all students and helping to problem-solve around specific children.

Outcomes, as judged by teachers, were better in inclusive education when one of the two following conditions prevailed: (1) supports provided in the class by a respected colleague; and (2) effective teaching using a range of teaching methods -- typically involving cooperative learning, active projects, a range of strategies for presenting information, adaptations based on ability levels and learning styles.

Support is provided by a range of individuals, some funded through special education, and some through other sources.

Most effective schools developed a *support team* that developed building-wide, coordinated support services including coordination and collaboration among support staff in individual classes and focused on individual students. In such schools, *child study* meetings provided teachers an opportunity to obtain input from other staff.

The philosophy and resulting practices of support staff, as well as issues of competence and personality, influenced the partnership between support staff and general education teachers. In some cases, incompatibilities rendered support ineffective or even counterproductive.

Some special education teachers and support staff provided significant leadership for professional development and seeding of innovative teaching practice from one classroom to another.

Paraprofessionals served many roles, in some cases essentially helping to segregate the student from other students in the general education classroom, in other cases playing a facilitating role for inclusion and collaborating in teaching all students in the class.

In the literature on inclusive education, as well as the Whole Schooling framework, support is identified as a critical component. The argument goes something like this: "Yes, you will have students with more challenging needs. However, with those students comes additional support." Indeed, inclusive education is often 'sold' to general education teachers with the promise of additional support in their classes.

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In our study, we sought to understand the way that effective support works in a school working to be inclusive. From one perspective, in the schools we studied, support was seen as a critical part of the success of inclusive education, consistent with much inclusive education literature. From another perspective, the role of support in an inclusive school is more complex. How support is provided, how much is needed, and what support looks like varies dramatically depending upon interactions with other variables, particularly the intensity of needs of the child, the skill of the teacher in implementing authentic, multi-level teaching, the building of a community in the classroom, and the philosophies of both the general education teacher and support personnel, particularly the special education teacher. In this section, we explore the components of support, the various ways we saw support operating, and explore exemplary strategies and issues for improving support services.

SUPPORT MODELS IN SCHOOLS

We observed several different approaches to providing support for inclusive learning opportunities in schools. In all models, we saw practices that seemed effective and others that were problematic. All of the study schools sought to have effective support systems. Compared to most schools, each school had exemplary components. Yet, each also had continuing challenges. While there was significant overlap in each schools configuration of support, each school had a very different feel and overall approach. Understanding support roles is complex given the differing professionals involved, the culture of the school, and the ways that philosophies and personalities may intermix. The chart on the following page provides a comparative description of the support structures in the intensive study schools. However, this chart tells only part of the story because variations occurred within each school from teacher to teacher, depending upon the relationships of the collaborating teachers, the impact of the overall philosophy of the school model, and other factors. We first provide a brief description that attempts to capture the essence of these different models.

Trans-disciplinary team for clustered group support.

Armstrong has developed a particularly strong support system for inclusive education. Several *specialists* – a special education teacher, a speech therapist, a counselor, a Title I coordinator who provides substantive leadership in literacy instruction, and an occupational therapist-- share an office in the center of the school and coordinate support services in collaboration with general education teachers. In addition, special funding was approved through the district that, mixed with special education and Title I funds, has allowed the school to hire paraprofessionals for most classrooms in the school. In addition, a small number of paraprofessionals are assigned as one-on-one assistants with students who have significant behavioral challenges. Such paraprofessionals often helped support a student in the general education classroom, often using a parallel curriculum. In cases of severe behavioral challenges, a paraprofessional might work with a student in a separate, small therapy room on various activities.

The special education teacher, Title I teacher, and speech therapist particularly work together to provide in-class supports, supervising aides jointly with general education teachers. Each classroom is assigned at least one specialist for support. Through co-teaching, modeling is provided on teaching strategies for a variety of students with special needs.

Support staff and general education teachers have learned to work as a family team, all taking responsibility for all children in the school, constantly sharing information and ideas, particularly in informal discussions at lunchtime as specialists and teachers eat together in the office. Once per month, each teacher in the school has a planning session on Wednesday afternoon with the specialist team.

Transdisciplinary Specialist Support Team

Betty, special education teacher, and Tracey, the speech therapist, talked about their working relationship as a team. The interviewer queried them regarding how they have developed as a team, how they cross over and share roles without conflict or apparent tension. "How do you describe what we do?" asks Tracey, a speech therapist in this K-3 school.

Some of it comes with the comfort that we've gained over the years. I have watched Betty work in the classroom and I've seen the things that she does. When I am comfortable watching her, I know that I can do that. I see how she talks to kids, the cues she gives them, the counseling she gives to parents. The same thing with behavior. I write behavior plans. There aren't too many speech therapists who do that but I've watched the psychologist enough over the years and am comfortable with what they do, what a behavior plan looks like and feels like in the classroom.

She raises both hands like she's holding a large beach ball for emphasis, eyes alert and mind grasping for words as Betty adds, "you've *been in* the classroom!!" Tracey laughs looking at Betty, "And I've *done* the behavior plans." "Yes, and that's the critical part," adds Betty as they both laugh in gentle enjoyment.

The interviewer comments that he is hearing them say that they have learned to cross roles because they have both been together in the classroom and have been open to doing what needs to be done to meet needs of children, rather than protecting professional role boundaries. You've been learning from one another, taking on each other's skills and roles. Tracey, says, "Right . . .

I didn't start out with that knowledge. It was not part of my training as a speech and language pathologist. It is something I picked up here from being in the classroom and watching and learning. I have learned a lot from some of the better teachers as well -- about behavior management, direction giving, how to support children in the classroom. Then I can share that with other teachers or send one teacher to another to obtain assistance.

Later Tracey talks more about how the different specialists mix their roles as they learn from one another. "Certainly I am going to have them work on that grip while I am there," she explains. "It is just very easy to do if you know that is needed. It is still not my primary goal. It is Betty's or someone else's. But I know what all the goals are so I can carry over and use it." Betty is anxious to encourage this point as Tracey talks. "Yeah!" she says gently.

In the same way, Betty is working on speech when she is doing reading lessons and so is the occupational therapist when she is working with a ball with children. She is saying the word 'bouncing, bouncing, bouncing'. She's doing

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language development anyway, so she might as well focus in on what the goals are so we can all work from the same page.

Betty, the special education teacher, is shaking her head in agreement, "that bringing in that sensory-motor focus and gross and fine motor emphasis helps our OT come a bit firmer into the fold. Since Betty [the part-time occupational therapist] has gotten here we have learned a lot from her and learned how to take that back into the classroom. Most of her work is done outside of the classroom because of her schedule ("and she uses big things", adds Tracey), "but she has taught us what to look for, what behavioral things might be related to sensory issues and that has helped". Tracey picks up this line of thought.

Yes, it is looking at that kid who is in line and misbehaving. Now you can look at it and say, 'He is sensory deficient. If he is standing in line, he can't handle having someone touch him! Here we put him right in the middle of the line and he can't be touched forward or backward and he starts to get upset, starts moving his arms and poking other people. Is that a behavioral issue or a sensory integration issue? It turns out to be behavioral but that is not the cause!

Later Betty and Tracey talk more about how they manage to be in the same place at the same time so that they can learn from one another.

A lot of times we try to schedule our time in the classrooms where we will be together. We've not been able to make that work so well this year. In past years, however, we have scheduled ourselves together so we would be a team and go in and work with the classroom teacher all at the same time. Also, we do a lot of communicating in the office and just observing each other in small groups, just sitting and watching.

Tracey adds,

While we are in classes together, it is center time so that we are in small groups with children. Children are rotating around to different centers, some independent studies, and we will sometimes pull kids for different groups. This gives us the opportunity to see one another work with children. Or when we do writing workshops we all team together where there are three teachers working on one assignment with the children on their writing which is notoriously difficult for the kids, especially the second graders. We have gotten some tremendous writing when there are enough people, especially specialists rather than paraprofessionals only, who can help give the cues when they are needed.

We have a different set up here since we selected a new staff as we opened the school. On the other hand, 1/3 are new. We have been able to maintain and build the culture, in part, by supporting the new teachers. As a specialist team, we make lots of efforts to get in the classroom of new teachers. Every teacher here has a support person, whether the special education teacher, Title I teacher, speech therapist, each has someone.

How do you support new teachers?

We assign one of us to the new teacher right away. For example, one new teacher had a number of students with language delays so I was the logical choice, says Tracey. No kid in that class has a special education label, though there are a few we think may be learning disabled, but a number of kids at risk. She needed some support. She had some training on how to use phonology but does not know the approach that we use in this school. So I am structuring some time to go to her class and do a lesson to help her learn. It is the same type of lesson I would do if I pulled them out. We separate the class in two and I demonstrate how she might use the materials. We can dialogue during planning time and I can give her suggestions regarding how to assess students with language difficulties. So I am guiding her through that part of the day. My plan is focusing on phonology. However, the Title I teacher is helping her learn guided reading. So she has the key areas of reading instruction supported by other specialists who can provide her assistance.

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Flexible teaming for authentic, multi-level instruction and community building.

Those students identified as having particular needs are supported by the "STAR Team" (support team for students at-risk) to provide supports and collaborate with general education teachers. These include two special education teachers, two Titles I funded teachers, one teacher funded through a grant for class size reduction, a reading clinician, and a speech therapist. A social worker and school psychologist also work part-time. Finally, a full-time coordinator works provides training and support to children in conflict resolution through a grant with Providence Hospital. These individuals work as a team developing collaborative schedules for in-class support. Students are heterogeneously placed in rooms across the school with much collaborative conversation among teachers across grade levels. No special education or other pull-out classes exist. They work together to help meet individualized student needs. Community building and student-helping-student strategies are used throughout the school by many teachers as one source of support for learning.

Rich and parallel support programs.

Hamilton School has a wealth of resources to provide support for student learning. Support staff includes the following:

- Two special education teachers are co-teaching with several teachers to whom they are assigned.
- Bilingual education specialist and several paraprofessionals
- Gifted education specialist who provides consultation with teachers and conducts some pull-out learning activities with students.
- A school psychologist also serves in a dual role as a parent / community facilitator and liaison, helping to develop programs to promote drug and violence prevention that include support groups, drug and violence prevention information programs, and others.
- An Early Intervention Team, funded through Reading Recovery, works in the lower elementary grades to provide intensive services to support literacy skill development of students.
- Paraprofessionals assigned to individual students with challenging needs, such as a student with a severe and multiple disability or students with autism.

Hamilton particularly relies on a formalized process of collaborative consultation in which students are identified as having challenges. A teacher and support staff member meet and develop a written, targeted intervention plan for the student. Special education teachers and the speech therapist largely engage in collaborative co-teaching. Depending upon the classes and staff involved, this may look different. Increasingly, the focus has been for support staff to collaboratively plan and teach lessons that would help students with special needs but involve the total class. In some cases, co-teachers may lead the lesson or the general and special education

teachers may switch roles between leading and helping individual students. In some cases, the special education teacher has viewed the role as working with specific students on a caseload.

Special education support staff meet weekly as a Building Team, as they call it. During this time they may have formal collaborative consultations regarding students with teachers, plan and coordinate work, engage in dialogue regarding key issues.

Clustered co-teaching and paraprofessionals.

At Evergreen Elementary, the support structures put in place include multiage teaching, looping, paraprofessionals, and special education co-teachers. These staff members assist in developing the sense of care and support that pervades the school. Wednesdays are set aside for intensive planning among staff. Common Planning Time is created by early student dismissal on Wednesdays. In the morning, substitutes are provided so that special education teacher co-teachers can meet. One time per month, all co-teachers from all three buildings (elementary, middle, and high schools) meet.

In lower elementary, paraprofessionals and parent volunteers provide multiple supports for individualized assistance to students. There are often three or more adults in a classroom. In upper elementary, two special education teachers work with selected 'inclusion' classrooms, co-teaching a half day in each of their assigned classrooms. There are also additional programs to provide support for students: a service learning program in which high school students work in the classrooms with teachers and students; and HOST, a mentoring program in which community volunteers read one-on-one with students.

Clustered co-teaching and special education core courses.

At Rogers High School, students with mild disabilities and a small number with moderate disabilities may enroll in general education classes with no support, take a special education core class, or take a course that is co-taught by a general and a special education teacher. Students with disabilities are clustered in certain sections of classes so that the team-taught classes are comprised of approximately two-thirds general education and one-third special education students. The special education staff appears to be a close staff, sharing an office that allows for constant communication of information about students, and support for one another.

Each teacher-team determines the specific ways in which they will teach the class. In some teams, the classroom teacher serves as the lead teacher and the special education teacher walks around assisting all the students (not just the special education students). In other teams, both teachers share and trade roles in flexible ways, balancing their split of interaction, lecturing, etc. In some classes, the special education teacher looked at all assignments submitted by students on that caseload so that grades might be adjusted if necessary. Special education teachers were available for reading tests orally, adapting assignments, and planning lessons.

Interdisciplinary learning teams.

Drummond High School was a new school, only a few years old at the time of our study. From the beginning, the architecture of the school, hiring of staff, and building of the curriculum

was aimed in building grade level interdisciplinary teams, on which a special education teacher served as a support person. In addition, the school moved away from tracking of courses. Honors programs were open to any student based on their interest and choice. A contract for additional, intensive work was developed between the student and supervising teacher and results judged by a panel of teachers. The Advanced Placement courses similarly were open to all students. Teachers linked across subject lines, a project made easier with movable walls between classes that often allowed 2-3 teachers to work together with some 60 students, supported by a special educator. The school did maintain self-contained classes for students with mental retardation. However, these students also participated more fully in the life of the school than in many traditional high schools.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

After examining our data from all the schools, we were able to identify a series of effective practices and guiding principles for support services. These principles are listed briefly in the table on the right.

Table VI.5-2:
Principles for Effective Inclusive Support Services

1. Inclusive. Students are grouped heterogeneously, pull-out services are minimized, and segregation is not re-created in the general education classroom.

2. Building community and behavioral challenges. Teachers are assisted in building a classroom community where children help one another.

3. Multi-level, authentic instruction. Help design and implement multi-level, authentic, challenging, and scaffolded instruction.

4. Adaptations. Assist teachers in designing and using needed instructional adaptations.

5. Child services coordination. Support staff coordinate services across multiple classes and professionals.

6. Teacher support coordination. Multiple services in a teacher's room are coordinated to insure consistency of approach.

7. Professional growth. Teachers are given opportunities for collaborative growth and learning.

8. Emotional support. Teachers have forums by which they get emotional support, opportunities share with one another, time and place for this to happen.

9. Teacher empowerment Support staff seek to empower

While some schools clustered students in certain classes, the most effective schools intentionally and systematically worked to insure heterogeneous groupings of students across and within classes. Support staff then figured out their schedules based on how students were distributed. This process contrasted with schools that clustered students largely for the administrative convenience of support staff.

Support staff tended to play roles either involving collaborative teaching or helping, which too often tended to be pull-out or pull-aside with only students on a caseload. The best practices that we observed, however, employed support staff to assist the teacher in developing effective instruction and a classroom climate that was supportive of all children learning at their own level. Thus, these support staff would work with the teacher in helping build a classroom community and design lessons that were authentic and multi-level. In all cases, support staff helped to develop adaptations and modifications as these were needed. The most effective teachers helped incorporate these strategies into the overall instructional design.

Effective support teams worked in very flexible ways both to coordinate services across support professionals within an individual classroom and to develop a support structure for the

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entire building. For the most effective schools, this process felt less bureaucratic and more personal, like a family.

Valued support for teachers had both a cognitive and emotional component. Teachers felt supported, part of a caring family. Support became one way that a community among school staff, children, and parents was experienced. Secondly, however, effective support provided ongoing opportunities for learning by teachers, a form of professional development. Finally, *effective support always empowered teachers. Administrators supported initiatives in multiple* ways as did support professionals. Problems occurred when support staff maintained their professional lines too rigidly, thus reducing the sense of flexibility necessary for empowerment to try innovations.

ISSUES IN COLLABORATION

A range of issues became apparent as we observed support staff and general education teachers work with one another. Following are some key themes that we observed.

Keeping children first. Staff talked constantly of the needs of children. When support worked effectively, educators were able to focus on the needs of children rather than bureaucratic requirements or their own roles. In all the schools in this study, for example, we observed few instances where professional turf concerns intruded on the focus on the needs of children. However, there were notable exceptions. In one situation, the principal requested assistance by the social worker for two children with strong social needs. However, the social worker refused, saying that her caseload was already beyond that required by the contract. This same social worker became incensed by the activities of a project on conflict management that she felt intruded on her professional territory.

Power. We also observed interesting influences on between the making of decision-making related to differences in competence, philosophy, personal style, and needs. In some cases, the general education classroom teacher directed the activities of support staff. Sometimes this was welcomed, sometimes not. In other cases, we observed support staff essentially inform the general education teacher what they would be doing with an individual student. In yet other cases, an entire program was designed by support staff to be delivered in the general education classroom. Sometimes, similar programs were designed collaboratively between general and special education teachers. In the most effective cases, general and special education staff collaborated in making decisions. This required, however, a common philosophical framework adopted by all parties.

Philosophy. We observed differences across teachers and between general and special education teachers. Some teachers aimed toward more contemporary, innovative teaching philosophies and approaches, whereas others stood by traditional teaching methods – worksheets, lectures, fill in the blank or multiple choice tests. Many general education teachers incorporated elements of both in their teaching. Many special educators we observed were trained based on a behavioral philosophy, heavily steeped in minute skills and task analysis with little understanding of or appreciation for holistic instructional practices such as readers and writers workshop or cooperative learning. Most support staff were trained in a pull-out model and had to struggle toward new approaches that support students and teachers in the general education classroom.

This was an ongoing struggle, implemented with significant professional anxiety by special educators. In many situations we observed general education teachers using more holistic, child-centered methods who were frustrated by support staff who did not understand well how to work in their classrooms and who tended to pull children out or to the back or side of their class to work on minute skills. On the other hand, we observed other support staff who were intentionally learning about holistic general education practices with gusto helping to seed innovations from classroom to classroom. In other cases, the general education teachers, had a skills-oriented, teacher-directed instructional approach at which point a match might exist between the general and special education teacher. Following are some variations on matches and non-matches with expected results, most of which we observed in our study.

Table VI.5-3: Matches of Teaching Philosophies and Practice

General education teacher	Special education/support staff	Result
Holistic, child-centered*	Skills, teacher directed	Mismatch – both teachers likely frustrated. Either special education teacher pulls students from the class or into a corner or hovers or the general education teacher directs the support teacher in specific activities that fit his/her instructional approach. Either way, little collaboration.
Skills, teacher directed	Holistic, child-centered	Mismatch – both teachers likely frustrated. Likely general education teacher plans and directs the lesson. The support teacher tries to facilitate more holistic thinking. (This does not happen often.)
Skills, teacher directed*	Skills, teacher directed	Match – Teachers happy. Often one teacher directs; the other (usually support person) is in helping role. Difficult to achieve genuine inclusion, however.
Holistic, child-centered*	Holistic, child-centered	Match – Teachers work collaboratively and flexibly in designing and implementing instruction.

* Match and mismatch we observed.

Balancing and sharing competence. The balance of competence between collaborating partners can go either way. The support staff person was sometimes the more skilled teacher. We observed support staff acting as mentors and professional development guides. In one school, for example, teachers were having difficulty teaching math at multiple levels using a new math program. The district hired a support teacher who worked 1/2 time in the building and taught a 30-minute demonstration lesson each week. The teacher thus learned new skills that were used throughout the week.

Beyond disciplinary territory. Traditionally, different aspects of human beings have been claimed as the territory of different disciplines. In an interdisciplinary model, the team looks at the total needs of the individual together. In practical terms, all would look together at literacy, behavioral, social, and sensory-physical needs. This brings the wisdom of the total team to play and enhances the capacity of the team to engage in needed work.

We observed several schools working hard to move beyond disciplinary territory, some with more success than others. One school was particularly successful. In this school, we found that the staff explicitly understood that they were moving across disciplinary territories and were able to articulate a rationale for this process.

AUTHENTIC TEACHING AND SUPPORT

We also came to see a relationship between outcomes of inclusive education as judged by teachers related to the interactions of two key variables: (1) support in the general education class by a respected colleague; and (2) effective multi-level teaching using a range of teaching methods -- typically involving cooperative learning, active projects, a range of strategies for presenting information, adaptations based on ability levels and learning styles. When these two efforts work together teachers tended to report high degrees of satisfaction. The Table below illustrates this relationship.

Table VI.5-4: Outcomes For Students And Teachers By Interaction Of Quality Of Teaching And Support

SUPPORTS / TEACHING	Poor teaching	Moderate teaching	Good to excellent
Good in - class supports	POOR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Fair to poor in class supports	POOR	FAIR	GOOD
Pull out supports: resource room, coordinated	POOR	FAIR	GOOD
Pull out resource room or special class. Uncoordinated	POOR	POOR	GOOD

At its simplest level, this chart illustrates the importance of good teaching that is based on the individual needs and functioning levels of the student: what we call Authentic Multi-level Instruction. However excellent the support, in our observations, it cannot compensate for teaching practices. On the other hand, the more effective the instructional practices, the less impact that support has on the judged outcomes. In this particular analysis, the outcomes were simply the opinions of the effectiveness of inclusion for students and teachers by the general and special education teachers involved.

As a summary reference, Table VI.5-5 below illustrates some key positive and negative support practices that we observed in schools.

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Table VI.5-5: Support Practices That Do and Do Not Support Inclusive Education	
Positive Practices	**Negative Practices**
Students with special needs are considered full members of the class. General education and special education teachers collaborate as real partners, negotiating and sharing work in the class. Collaborating staff share responsibility for all students in the class. Students know that there are 'two (or more) teachers' in the room. Students with special needs are part of all aspects of the class so that outsiders find it difficult, if not impossible, to identify the 'special kids'. Collaborating staff work together to design teaching at multiple levels that includes all students. 90% of collaborative time is spent this way and 10% on doing accommodations and adaptations.	Students with disabilities are clustered in one place in the room – at the back, on one side of the room, in their own row. The special education teacher or paraprofessional serves as a helper copying or filling out forms, or helping a student "go through the motions." An "included" student is enclosed within a wall of file cabinets to keep behaviors in check. The special education teacher worked only with students with disabilities or other students who are on his/her 'caseload'. The co-teacher, aide, or other specialist sat beside the student and had them work separately from the rest of the class in the back or a corner of the room. The co-teacher primarily develops instructional adaptations and advice on how to teach differently for all students was not sought.

STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Classroom make-up and decision processes

Schools varied in how they handled placement of students in classes. The most obvious differences were related to two issues: (1) clustering or heterogeneous student placement in classes; and (2) personnel involved and the decision-making process.

Clustering Students And Support Services

Three schools, two elementary and one high school, used a model that we could describe as clustered co-teaching. A fourth elementary school engaged in limited clustering. However, they were so effective at distributing students throughout the school that this was not obvious. During the time period of our study, Hamilton Elementary School shifted from clustered placement of students to a commitment to heterogeneous grouping.

In schools in which students were clustered based on certain characteristics, most often a special education label, students with disabilities were enrolled in certain classes at higher rates than their distribution in the school population, so that other classes at a grade level in the elementary school or subjects such as English in the high school simply did not include students with identified disabilities. In each situation, the perceived need to provide adequate support staff, on the one hand, and helping support staff to manage their time, on the other, drove this decision. Only in the elementary school that shifted from clustering did we hear concerns expressed about negative side effects of the clustering model. Support staff – special education,

bilingual, gifted teachers, speech therapists –saw clustering as a way to help them organize their work in classroom, minimizing the number of classes in which they were involved.

We observed many problems in clustering. Overloading one classroom with a disproportionate number of students with special needs meant fewer opportunities for other students to model learning and support students with special needs and created overtaxed, highly stressed teachers. Since some teachers did not have students with special needs, the teachers who did often felt over-burdened and unfairly treated. These sentiments were openly expressed at staff meetings. Teachers who had no labeled students, on the other hand, received no special support, even though many unlabeled students in their room needed assistance and general consultation about classroom management and instructional practice would have been helpful.

Numerous potential side effects grow out of the process of clustering of students. We were concerned that classes containing clusters of students with disabilities might become labeled and stigmatized. We were part of conversations and meetings in which teachers essentially bartered for who 'got' special students. Some teachers were particularly frustrated as they saw the 'inclusion' classes getting support in working with students with special needs. Such teachers felt that they had equally challenging students even though they were not identified with a special education label. On the other side, some teachers in the 'inclusion' clustered classes sometimes felt burned out. One very caring, supportive teacher told of one year in which she had many challenged students. "The students would have been fine," she explained. "But I had to go to so many meetings for IEPs and consultations with each of the support people that I didn't have time to teach."

After much discussion, one school in the study made the decision to move from clustered placements to heterogeneous placements, an initiative pushed by the general education teachers. The support staff had been resistant to this idea because they could not see how they could manage to provide support when children were spread out across all the classrooms in the school. Once the change was made, however, placement decisions were made first and then support staff worked out arrangements with general education teachers.

Heterogeneous Placement And Distribution Of Support Services

Two schools used a system of heterogeneous placement of students by grade level teams. In the spring as such decisions were being made, teachers completed a simple form that included items regarding overall academic ability, behavioral challenges, race, and socio-economic status. This information was compiled and used to systematically heterogeneously group students in classes. They also considered

Table VI.5-6: Heterogeneous Student Distribution
An Example

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Academic Ability			
High	4	5	4
Medium	15	13	16
Low	6	7	5
Behavior			
Excellent	8	7	6
Average	12	14	13
Poor – high support needs	5	4	6
Socio-economic status			
High	5	2	5
Middle	14	15	13
Lower	6	8	7
TOTAL IN CLASS	**25**	**25**	**25**

the way a particular group of children related to one another, and the personality and skills of the teacher compared to the styles and dispositions of the children. In these schools, support staff were an integral part of the decision-making process. Once decisions were made, support staff would work with the general education teachers to configure optimal provision of supports and services in the classrooms. By the second year of our observations, Hamilton Elementary had shifted to a similar process, borrowing from their observations at Meadowview, to facilitate heterogeneous student placement instead of clustering students.

In middle schools or high schools, scheduling was more complex given that students no longer remain in one classroom all day, learning all subjects from one teacher, together with the same group of classmates. We had hoped to see high schools eliminating tracked classes – lower level English and biology, for example. We saw some movement in this direction in Drummond High School, which had eliminated advanced placement classes, providing all students an opportunity to receive advanced placement credit if they developed and completed an individual learning contract that involved more advanced work. This option was open to everyone, based on interest rather than a placement test or previous academic record.

Table VI.5-7: An Inclusive Continuum Of Services
Illustrative Example

Least supports and services	Collaborative team planning: general and special education, parents, other professionals.
	Collaborative consultation. Periodic consultation with teacher either in or out of class. Building relationships in the classroom.
	In-class support co-teacher. Periodic in-class assistance in adapting lessons, instructing special students or the whole class. Intentional assistance from classmates.
	Specialist assistance – speech therapy, occupational therapy, rehabilitation teachers, orientation and mobility, etc.
	Paraprofessional 'aide' part to full-time.
	In-class support co-teacher. More than half to full time. Circles of support / friends.
Greatest supports and services	All of above services, plus any additional consultative or direct services (e.g. Therapist for child and family), psychiatrist.

Interpreting The Continuum Of Services
Responding to Special Education Rules and Regulations

IDEA requires that schools have in place a continuum of alternative placements, originally designed to insure that students with disabilities have access to services and supports they need. Taylor[1] suggested that there is no reason to link more intense services and supports with segregated places, but that many degrees of service intensity may be delivered in general education settings and in the community. The table provides an illustrative example of an ***inclusive continuum of services*** that we saw in the schools that we studied. (Supports such as adaptive seating, augmentative

1 Taylor, S. (1988). *Caught in the continuum: A critical analysis of the principle of least restrictive environment.* Journal of The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 18(2), 75-83.

communication systems, and assistive technology can be combines with personnel support at any point on the continuum, depending on student needs.)

In Michigan, the state developed its own law and regulations. While these must technically be consistent with the federal law, the structure of Michigan's regulations has centered on prescriptive services provided in segregated schools and classrooms. During the latter year of this project, an effort by the state to bring its rules and regulations into closer match with the more inclusive intent of federal law floundered and was essentially withdrawn.

Staff in each of the project schools struggled with their desire to implement inclusive education and the bureaucratic structures imposed on them. Most schools, except those in the poorest locations, had disability identification rates far below that state average. In Michigan funding is still driven by identification rates, so school principals often struggled to maintain funding for support staff. In each case, the administrator felt strongly that the support provided in the general education classroom, as well as other instructional improvement efforts, reduced the need to formally label children for special services. As teachers at Meadowview said, "Students who are labeled special education don't get anything different than other students. We have support staff in our rooms who work with all students, and particularly those who are struggling. We teach in ways that help children learn at their own level."

TEAMING FOR SUPPORT

In the schools we studied, substantial energy was put into developing working teams following various configurations and serving different purposes. Such teams helped provide a support mechanism that shaped the total culture of the school and contrasted significantly with comparison schools where, at best, teaming often meant listening in a group to an administrator hand out decrees and orders. In this section, we describe the various types of teaming we observed.

Collaborative Teacher Teams

Collaborative teams involved two or more teachers working together at various levels of intensity from periodic collaboration on a learning activity or school project to collaboratively planning and teaching daily lessons to a larger group of students. A special education teacher and/or other support person was an integral member of such teams in the schools we studied. In three elementary schools, teachers were organized by grade levels and in one high school by departments (e.g. Science and Math, English and Social Studies). However, in one school that used looping and multi-age extensively, teachers grouped themselves as "lower elementary" and "upper elementary" in formal and informal teams. In the other schools, classes at different grade levels were intentionally placed next door to one another so that teachers of different grade levels developed collaborative, multi-age instruction linking activities across their classrooms. Drummond High School used an interdisciplinary team where social studies, literacy, math, science, and special education teachers worked together, rather than as separate subject departments. This school had movable walls and adjoining rooms specifically designed with collaborative teaching in mind. In several schools, teacher teams often used themes to link the subject areas and classrooms together. In one school, a team of teachers, including special

education and Title I support teachers, used a yearlong theme of space and ocean as an organizer for many activities. They met across grade levels to plan instruction throughout the year.

Child And Teacher Support Teams

All elementary schools in our study organized *child study teams* where teachers brought concerns regarding an individual child to the attention of other staff. Such teams met either weekly or bi-weekly. Team meetings were attended by the teacher who referred a student, other teacher representatives, the principal, parents and family members, and support staff in the building, often a special education and Title I teacher (if applicable), counselor, social worker, or psychologist. These teams were called by different names in different schools. Team meetings varied in terms of formality and style.

Hamilton Elementary used a formalized process of *collaborative consultation* in which a teacher presented an issue and obtained assistance from others in working with a student. One teacher, for example, was concerned about Brandon, a child in her class who had diabetes. Brandon's blood sugar level was not stabilized, and the child frequently needed to stop school work and ask the teacher's help in administering a simple blood sugar test. The teacher was worried about the impact on the rest of the class and felt need for assurance that she had backup from other staff in case of a medical crisis. She obtained input from other teachers, two nurses who attended the meeting, and support staff in the building – psychologist, special education teacher, and the principal. She went away with some commitment for assistance from support staff in monitoring Brandon's situation and helping her in dealing with the class, support that was helpful to her. The team consultation gave her the opportunity to share her concerns, make people aware of her needs, and to get ideas for addressing her concerns about the reactions of Brandon's classmates.

In all the schools we observed, with the exception of one, staff reported that these teams were pro-active, problem-solving entities, providing teachers an opportunity to work together, obtaining suggestions and assistance from their colleagues. In one case, a school that served large numbers of low-income children, we were aware that such team meetings increasingly became places to vent frustration about children and families. The meetings served largely to develop procedures for referral to segregated classes or programs. At the same time, we were aware of several general education teachers who came to those meetings to advocate for the continued inclusion of such challenging students in their classes.

Individual Student Teams

Teams were also built around students with special needs as part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 plan. For example, Elizabeth, a student with a mild learning disability, had the special and general education teacher and the school psychologist on her team. Donald, a student who had a complex medical condition, severe mental retardation, and used a wheelchair and computerized communication device, had numerous people on his team – special education teacher, speech therapist, occupational therapist, assistive technology consultant, general education teacher, and nurse.

Support Staff Teams

In the most effective schools, the *support staff* -- special education teachers, Title I and bilingual teachers, counselors, social workers, psychologists, and others -- worked s a team deliberately and collaboratively to develop a comprehensive system of support. In Armstrong Primary, for example, the specialists met together frequently, discussing children, the needs of teachers, and strategies for particular students. They developed coordinated schedule of support for classrooms, sometimes intentionally working in a classroom together, at other times assuring they are in different places, depending upon teacher and student needs. Similarly, in Hamilton Elementary, support staff meet formally early in the morning twice per week to discuss students and develop coordinated schedules.

We also observed less effective practices in which specialists worked in parallel with only the children assigned to their own caseloads, developing their work scheduled separately from one another. For example, the special education support teacher and the gifted education specialist both work with Dennis, a fifth grade teacher, but did not coordinate their services or talk together about how to support him in instructing students with such differing abilities. In such situations, we saw some teachers struggle to accommodate many specialists coming in and out of their rooms.

Table VI.6-8: Scheduling And Collaborative Teaching:
Example Schedule for Collaborating Support Teacher

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 – 9: 30	3rd grade	Kindergarten	3rd grade	3rd grade	3rd grade
9:30 - 10:20	2nd grade	2nd grade	2nd grade	2nd grade	2nd grade
10:30 – 11:15	1st grade	1st grade	Multi-age 3-4-5	1st grade	1st grade
12:30 – 1:30	5th grade	4th grade	Kindergarten	4th grade	Kindergarten
1:30 – 2:30	3rd grade	3rd grade	3rd grade	3rd grade	3rd grade
2:30 – 3:30	Planning period	Planning period	Planning period	Planning period	Planning period

SCHEDULING AND COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

Most of the schools in our study recognized the need for general education teachers and specialists to have formal planning time together. Several interesting and innovative approaches

were used. Meadowview Elementary School had organized block-scheduling procedures so that all grade level teachers had specials at the same time on a rotating schedule. Some schools schedule specials (art, music, gym) at the same time for teams of teachers so that they can meet together. The table below illustrates such a schedule that uses a six-day rotation to provide for 35 minutes per day of collaborative planning time. Another school blocked such specials for all lower elementary teachers in the morning, for upper elementary in the afternoon to allow for collaborative planning time. Evergreen School received approval from the voters and their unions to devote one-half day every week to 'Common Planning Time.' On those days, students were dismissed early to provide opportunities for teacher planning time and in-service programs.

Co-teachers who work with several teachers develop their schedule both around the needs of teachers for support and practical limitations of their own schedule. This can cause difficulties and challenges but can often work well. The next table illustrates the schedule of one co-teacher in Meadowview Elementary School. In many cases, support teachers are assigned to teams of teachers. In elementary schools that use multi-age teaching, one support teacher might be assigned to 'lower el' (K-2) and another to 'upper el' (3-5).

Table VI.5-9: Block schedule for "specials" and planning times:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6*
8:40 – 9:15	Art 5th-a Music 5th-b PE 5th-c	Art 5th -c Music 5th -a PE 5th - b	Art 5th - b Music 5th - b PE 5th - a	Art 5th - a Music 5th - b PE 5th - c	Art 5th - c Music 5th - a PE 5th - b	Art 5th - b Music 5th - c PE 5th - a
9:20 – 9:55	Art MA -a Music MA -b PE MA -c	Art MA -c Music MA -a PE MA -b	Art MA -b Music MA –c PE MA -a	Art MA -a Music MA –b PE MA -c	Art MA -c Music MA –a PE MA -b	Art MA -b Music MA –c PE MA -a
10:00 – 10:35	Art K -a Music K -b PE	Art Music PE	Art Music K -a PE K -b	Art Music PE	Art K -b Music PE K -a	Art Music PE
10:40 – 11:15	Art 4th -a Music 4th -b PE 4th -c	Art 4th -c Music 4th -a PE 4th -b	Art 4th -b Music 4th -c PE 4th -a	Art 4th -a Music 4th -b PE 4th -c	Art 4th -c Music 4th -a PE 4th -b	Art 4th -b Music 4th -c PE 4th -a

5th –a = first 5th grade teacher and 5th –b is the second fifth grade teacher.
MA = 'multi-age teachers'. K = kindergarten.

Collaborating teachers sometimes helped general education teachers design teaching for diverse students. For example, at Meadowview Elementary, a teacher felt unprepared to teach science in his fourth grade classroom, and he talked frankly with the special education support teacher. They developed a plan in which the support teacher taught the science lesson each day, since she had strong skills in this area. During this time, the teacher assisted the support teacher and helped students with special needs.

Table VI.5-10: Sample Schedule for A Day of Collaborative Teaching

TIME	TEACHER	Professional Support	Community Partners in the Class
8:30	Choice time	Share ideas for multi-level teaching.	Volunteers read with selected children.
9:00	Writer's workshop-rove, help edit, & assess	Special education teacher and speech therapist work with groups. We all collaborate in supporting all students.	Peer relations program teaches social skills once a week.
10:00	Reader's workshop	Special education teacher goes with class to library once a week.	
10:45	Read-aloud		Several parents or community volunteers per month read books.
12:10	Class meeting		
12:30	Specials		
1:00	Math-one group. Same math skills. Kid experts.	Divide class in two with special needs student in special education teacher's group. Few minutes one on one.	
2:00	Theme study-integrating literacy, science & social studies	Share content. Get ideas for multi-level teaching.	Residents from local hospital talk to class once a month

IN-CLASS COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

We observed very differing relationships between general and special education teachers. For example, in one school an exemplary teacher taught children with very different abilities together in creative ways. However, she neither asked for nor wanted additional staff support in her classroom. She enjoyed teaching by herself, and had worked out processes by which students support one another successfully. Conversely, other teachers thrived on teaming with support staff.

Each school had similar and unique ways of structuring their support services depending upon a range of variables. These are not neatly categorized into various models. One dimension of variation is defined by those that relied on *heterogeneous grouping* in the classroom versus those that favored what we came to term *stable ability grouping*. On another dimension, some support services were provided in the general education class; others relied on pull-out or pull-aside methods. Table VI.5-11 illustrates the matrix of approaches.

Table VI.5-11: Grouping Students for Instruction		
	Heterogeneous Grouping	**Ability Grouping**
In-class	Co-teaching Conflict resolution Social-emotional learning Speech therapist language development whole class or small group Enrichment program for all.	Flex groups for literacy Centers Guided reading
Pull-aside / back		Direct instruction One on one tutoring
Pull-out		Direct instruction One on one tutoring (special education; bilingual; Reading Recovery) Extension activities (gifted) Special education resource classes Speech therapy

Four Approaches to Collaborative Teaching

We also observed four key approaches by which support staff provide support to teachers, each based on a different theory.

Pull-out remediation.

Remediation aims to improve student performance in identified deficit areas. The assumption is that students possess within themselves either a deficit or special ability that creates needs that cannot be met in the regular classroom and that services must be provided by a specialist. In few cases did we observe the traditional mode, in which special instruction is provided in a separate classroom or therapy room. Three schools did maintain a two separate special education classrooms that they used in this manner. However, the other five schools did not use special education or "resource" rooms. However, specialists would often pull a student to the hall, to the back of the class, or to a small office when they used this approach. This strategy often conflicted with the philosophy and instructional plans of the general education teacher, resulting in some tension between the two professionals, In one school, a small groups of children walked to a small classroom once per day for Direct Instruction sessions. In some cases, the teacher pulling the students out worked with the teacher to choose the most appropriate time, but in other cases, pulled-out students had their day severely disrupted

Adaptations.

Frequently, support staff worked with the child in the regular classroom and developed needed *adaptations* to the curriculum or instructional method. Adaptations were specifically designed for an individual student and created a variation from the typical curriculum or instructional process. The state goal was helping the student be successful. In adapting curriculum, the existing curriculum and instructional approach were typically seen as unchangeable.

Teacher need.

In a small number of situations, we observed the support staff negotiating with the teacher based on identified needs of the teacher. In one situation, for example, a teacher wanted to use a running record (a systematic analysis of errors in a reading sample) on each child but needed to learn improve her comfort with the strategy. The support staff person spent 30 minutes twice per week demonstrating lessons in the class and mentoring the teacher. In another situation, a seasoned teacher felt inadequate in her science teaching. The support staff person had extensive experience in this area and decided to take the lead in teaching the science lessons. This simultaneously provided daily, supportive professional development for teaching science.

Multi-level teaching.

The fourth approach to support services is one in which support staff worked with general education teachers to design and implement multi-level curriculum and instructional activities that . . .

- Involve students of varying abilities working together in pairs or small groups
- Challenge each student at his or her level of ability
- Teach through authentic activities such as project-based learning
- Draw on student strengths and abilities
- Provide scaffolding that allows the student to engage in tasks just beyond his or her ability level, while providing needed assistance and instructional support.

The assumption in this approach is that instruction can be designed and implemented manageably at very diverse ability levels so that all students benefit. The focus is on meeting individual needs by creating a classroom that is designed for all students. In this approach, support staff assist teachers in designing and implementing learning activities. We observed several support staff and teachers working collaboratively in designing and implementing lessons in this way, examples that were described in the chapter on authentic multi-level teaching.

It is clear that the field of special education is developing new roles for itself, figuring out along the way how to function in an inclusive school, working in collaboration with general education teachers. What special education teachers do in general education classrooms, we have found, varies greatly upon their own abilities and philosophy and how this interacts with the general education teacher. Increasingly, we have seen special education and general education teachers collaborating in designing authentic, multi-level lessons that are implemented in partnership. In the example below, the special education teacher is working to set up an actual store in the classroom that will allow students, among other things, to work on math skills. This store functions much like a center, used by a small group of students at one time while other students are engaged in other activities with Melanie, the general education teacher.

> Sally, the special education co-teacher, is talking with the students about the roles that they will play in operating a store. "How can we make this display attractive so you would want to buy our products?" she asks, talking about peanuts and a box of saltines. She sends a student off to get the cash register another teacher is loaning them. "Who are shoppers?" she asks. "You are very lucky today. You are going to design a receipt. Raise your hand if you know what a receipt is." A bunch of hands go up. She sends another student to the office to get a school receipt to use as a model. She bit by bit gets each of the students involved in different roles and working on different projects setting up their store. They break into groups all over the place, talking, and lots of noise. After awhile Melanie and Sally ask for quiet by saying, "Give me five." They begin to pose a problem that the students must deal with in running their store. "The computers are down and we have a task. We have trouble in Motor City," says Sally as she and Melanie lead a discussion about what they will now do.

Methods of Organizing Collaborative Teaching

We observed many types of support staff providing collaborative support within the classroom. We summarize these approaches below.

Team teaching.

The most common method of collaborative teaching we saw between two or more general education teachers. Teachers team together for many purposes. In one school, two multi-age classes (grades 2-3) adjoin, and the teachers engage in collaborative instruction. Two teachers at Meadowview Elementary School decided to teach together in a larger room, and combined their two classes for one year. Other teachers work together on units organized by themes or collaborate in teaching particular subjects. At Drummond High School, interdisciplinary teams of science, social studies, language arts, and special education teachers had adjoining rooms and

worked together on projects throughout the year. One high school class read and wrote with students in grades 1-3 once per month, visiting the school for two hours in the morning. Similarly, many upper elementary classes pair with students in grade one for buddy reading and special projects. All these arrangements provided additional support and collaborative opportunities for both students and teachers. Below we provide a detailed example of some observations that illustrate the interplay of the general and special education teacher in a well-developed co-teaching process.

High School Team teaching

Pre-Algebra class.

Brad was at the front of the class—covering a lesson about prime numbers. He used an overhead projector to show his work. Angela [co-teacher] was situated in the back of the room, also working on the same lesson and repeating the steps.

"Does anyone need help?" asked Brad, as the students called him.

Angela made the rounds, helping anyone who either raised a hand or looked as though they were having trouble.

Machine shop

At the start of class, students at regular armchair desks in a tiered section of the room. They were listening to their two instructors review the plans for the day. The other half of the huge shop was filled with automotive machinery. It is impossible to tell which is the special education teacher and which is the general education teacher. There is a true blending of instruction: one says something, the other adds to it. Following the class meeting, the students are dismissed to their hands-on work. Each of the teachers moves around the room, seamlessly.

Horticulture class

Bill and Art were the teachers. Fifteen students were in the class seated at lab tables. The horticulture class traditionally had students with a range of abilities, including not only special education students and general education students, but this was a class that students from the center program [severe disabilities] were permitted to elect.

"Take out your Introductory Horticulture books," requested Bill.

"Eric, take a different seat today," Eric was told after continuing to talk after class started.

"Twila, will you take a different seat today, so we need to get organized? Josh will you sit down? We want to get the thank you notes out and we also want to start to talk about our plant sale. The rough copies of the letters go in the SAE book. I'll need to see Olivia and Alesha up in the front. "

Later, Bill explained this was the first day back after the class participated in a flower arranging exposition held at the civic arena. The students, he thought, were experiencing a letdown after all that excitement.

"Suppose I want to organize the plants that are in the hallway? ... If you were to organize the plants, there are several ways to do it, so I'll just talk, and you take your notebooks out. Write down "ways to organize plants." Only write down one group of words at a time.... Annual...perennial ...and bi-annual.... If we were to organize this way, what would you have to know about the plants to do that?

A student shouted out: "How long they grow."

"An annual plant--how long does it grow," asked Bill?

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"One year.... If I want to grow annual plants, I'd have to put them in every year....

How about perennial? How long does a perennial grow?

Silence.

Art, the second teacher helps out.

"Well think about it, we just reviewed annual."

They understood, and the lesson continued. Bill continued to lecture and Art walked around sometimes whispering in some students' ears or looking at their notebooks with them. After the lecture portion of the class, there was time to write thank you notes and do other flower related hands-on projects. A lab assistant worked in the back of the room wrapping flower stems. One of the students picked up one of the flowers and gave it to a student in a wheelchair to smell. Other students were unpacking flowers that had arrived. One asked if they should be cut.

"Yes."

Differing styles of interactions in the school.

It is up to each team to work out the specifics of how they will teach the class. In some teams, the classroom teacher appears to be the lead teacher and the special education teacher walks around assisting all the students, not just the special education students. In other teams, it is nearly impossible to tell which teacher is which as there is a balance of interaction, lecturing, and other teaching activities. In some classes, the special education teacher looks at all assignments submitted by students on that caseload so that grades may be adjusted if necessary. In other teams, one teacher is available for reading tests orally and adaptations such at this. Not all students take part in the team-taught classes, but they are very popular. Those students determined to have the greatest need are scheduled in team-taught classes. In this manner, all students are equal; no one knows who is a special education student and who is a general education student.

In-class collaborative teaching by support teachers.

We observed collaborative support by other specialists than special education teachers who included:

- Title I (federal funds for schools with high concentrations of low income students)
- Bilingual education
- Gifted and talented education

Special education and bilingual teachers had specific students assigned to their caseload, for whom they are responsible. However, they were also allowed to work with the total class in many schools as long as the individualized needs of the students were being met. For example, Sally, the special education teacher, and Jasmine, the general education teacher, planned collaborative lessons and taught them together. Both teachers traded roles in leading the class, helping groups work on projects, and providing direct skills instruction to individual students or small groups as needed.

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In-class collaborative teaching by related services specialists.

Many other specialists provide what IDEA calls *related services*, "transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education"[2], and may also be available, depending upon student need. In inclusive models in our schools, speech therapists came into the classroom and assisted students in the context of a class communication activity, often with a small group, sometimes with the whole class, where the skills of the speech therapist were used to promote language development of all children while targeting the specific needs of a student with special needs. For example, one speech therapist worked with a student or small group of students on the articulation and production of specific sounds as they sign a song or read text aloud. The same IEP goals and objectives were practiced during literature circles or small group discussions. Peers served as fluent role models and supporters for their peers with speech/language challenges, naturally reinforcing and expanding assistance provided by the speech therapist. We observed specialists providing direct services in the general education classroom and indirect, consultative services to assist the teacher and other specialists in working with a student.

In-class team instruction.

In some schools, teams of support staff worked with teachers to provide collaborative instruction. In some elementary schools, teams in the lower elementary grades assisted the classroom teacher in intensive literacy instruction. In Hamilton Elementary, for example, a reading specialist supervises a team of one teacher and three paraprofessionals, individuals who are not certified as teachers but are hired to provide instructional assistance, who spend 45 minutes each day in the first and second grade classes working with the classroom teacher. They put the children into small groups for reading and writing instruction. At Meadowview Elementary School, the speech therapist and special education teacher team with the classroom teacher to do whole and small group literacy instruction.

2 United States Department of Education, 34 CFR Parts 300 and 303: Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers With Disabilities, Final Regulations. Washington: Federal Register, May 12, 1999.

In-class support by paraprofessional.

Paraprofessionals were used by many schools, to provide assistance to students and teachers. In our study, we observed much potential and much work to be done in improving the roles of paraprofessionals. In some cases, paraprofessionals were assigned to one specific student. In most cases, these were students judged to have behavioral challenges and/or significant cognitive disabilities.

The roles played by paraprofessionals assigned to individual students varied based on the overall culture and approach of the school as well as the approach by the teacher. In one case, a paraprofessional assigned to a child with autism had a very close relationship with the mother, was seen as the prime conduit of information and interaction by the parent, and spent much one-on-one time with the child in the classroom to the side of the class. The general education teacher, however, both had substantial experience and training with children with autism. During the year, she gently worked towards better integrating this child and pulling the paraprofessional into broader helping roles in the class. (As frequently happened, the paraprofessional stayed with the student as he moved through the school year after year. A result of this is often that the paraprofessional sees the student as "her" child, rather than as a member of the class and the responsibility of the general education teacher.)

In another situation, the paraprofessional assigned to a child with severe multiple disabilities frequently played a role close to co-teacher or assistant teacher, leading group discussions and even taking over responsibility for the classroom for short periods. She would also work with "her" student off to the side on occasion. The children in this classroom themselves took on roles helping the student with disabilities, and one or two were always at the table with him. They would move his wheelchair from place to place for small group work. The paraprofessional did assume total responsibility for the student's personal care needs.

We observed some other situations where the paraprofessional helped to distance the child from the rest of the students. One child in a third grade class had his desk, the only individual desk in the room, off to the side where the paraprofessional engaged in one-on-one, parallel curriculum activities with him. Ultimately, several students' parents in such situations chose to have them return to a segregated class due to their social isolation in the school.

In other situations, paraprofessionals were assigned to the class as a whole. One school sought to have a paraprofessional full-time in every class. This school relied heavily on centers and small group instruction. Paraprofessionals were trained as part of the instructional team, working particularly with lower functioning students. In another school, paraprofessionals served as part of an early intervention literacy team that came 45 minutes several times a week to lower elementary classes. They received training in implementing a highly structured program based on guided reading.

Interestingly, in three schools paraprofessionals were used very little. In the two high schools, students had very mild disabilities. In the third school, however, an elementary school, paraprofessionals were not used even in classrooms with students with moderate disabilities. However, this changed with a new administration concerned with students with behavioral challenges.[3]

Volunteer Support And Community Agency Collaboration

Community resources provided various types of support in the schools we studied. These included volunteers – parents and community members – as well as agencies that also worked with children and families. Parents and others from the community not only to baked cookies and provided refreshments but read stories to classes, mentored individual students during or after school, and otherwise served in roles similar to those assigned to paraprofessional staff. Community agencies also brought specialized resources to the school. The schools in our study all drew in substantial ways on volunteer resources and agencies in the community. The profile for each school was quite different, depending upon local connections. At one school, for example, a hospital sent interns into the school on a weekly basis to teach students a science lesson related to the body. Additionally, a violence prevention organization brought a special program into the school to provide emotional support via group meetings with students and training of students in conflict resolution. In two other schools, special programs had been established where business employees or local community members were provided training in mentoring in literacy and reading and would spend time with one or more children on a scheduled basis.

Media Specialists and Instructional Support

We found that in several schools media specialists, previously called school librarians, were important resources to teachers, aiding them in locating written materials of various levels of difficulty, providing assistance to individuals and groups of students engaged in authentic research and study projects, and providing training to students in using computers and other media. In one school in particular, the media specialist explained that she had thought of becoming a special education teacher but decided that she could have more impact as a media specialist. When classes came for reading and research activities, she was aware of and reached out to students with disabilities. This individual also was the central organizer of a yearly circus, put on with all the lower elementary teachers, where some students did research regarding famous circus performers, dressed as these individuals, and acted their role in the circus as each class played roles of different circus acts involving all the children in a production in the high school gym.

[3] We are using the traditional mild-moderate-severe continuum here.

ROLE OF SPECIALISTS IN THE POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING OF THE SCHOOL

What role do support staff or specialists, non-classroom teachers in the school play in the overall political structure and decision-making in the school? Another related question is: What is the status and formal and informal influence by support staff? We found this to play out in very different ways, and we saw some degree of shifts in the schools over our time there.

In some schools, support staff tended to be less influential, and had lower status than general education teachers. This was, in part, a function of the perceived competencies of at least some support staff and job changes that occurred. For example, in one school, a teacher who was viewed by many as largely ineffective was placed in a support teacher role, seemingly to get her out of the classroom.

In other schools, however, the support staff had powerful, influential roles. In Armstrong Primary, the principal relied on the team of specialists as collaborators in making many decisions and in helping to set a climate for the entire school. This is reflected in the interview reported earlier with the special education teacher and speech therapist. This team met formally and daily ate lunch together, building community with one another while discussing many issues related to children, families, and teachers. What we have called a trans-disciplinary team also functioned as a community leadership team. From our observations, teachers respected their leadership and support.

In Hamilton Elementary, the support staff similarly had more influence and power. However, this had a different flavor to it. The school administration provided much opportunity for discussion about inclusion, support, and the roles of all involved. Yet, there seemed a tendency to focus on 'my program' as much as having a vision of the entire school. When we first began observing in this school, students with various special needs were clustered in selected classes in each grade level: one teacher received many special education students, another received bilingual students, and another received gifted students. These decisions were made entirely by the support staff to make it easier to schedule their time. After much discussion, the entire staff decided to shift this decision-making process so that grade level teams were the prime decision-makers for student placement.

In this same school, support staff, of whom there were many, tended to operate in parallel. The special education staff met as what was termed a "building team" twice per week, focusing on various programmatic and student issues. It was in these meetings that formal collaborative consultations could be scheduled by a teacher. However, we were not aware of either formal or informal collaborative planning regarding interventions in the classes of individual teachers between special education, the early intervention literacy program, the gifted specialist, or bilingual teachers. Each of these appeared to be seen as the 'territory' of the individual specialists.

This manner of operating also carried into the classroom. Some support staff, particularly one special education teacher, worked collaboratively with the general education teachers to plan lessons, in which they would often shift roles. In some cases, several support staff collaborated with the general education teacher to develop centers where students shifted from center to center. In other cases, however, the special education teacher would pull students off to the side or attempt to help them; or pull the student out of class. The bilingual and "gifted" teachers did likewise. As a result, students would be coming and going throughout the day. In several classes,

the classroom teacher had little input into the activities and schedule of the support staff and felt frustrated with what was occurring, feeling it was not the best approach for the child.

These and related observations in other schools point to the potential problems and also the potential use of support staff in facilitating positive change in a building. Particularly when support staff and the administration have a coherent vision, working relationships with teachers are developed which allow both leadership input from support staff but also decision-making by teachers, support staff have potential to be facilitators of change and ongoing professional development.

CONCLUSION

Support plays an important role in building an effective inclusive school. However, given the many relationships, professional disciplines, and approaches that are possible, effective support is very complex. This study highlighted many of these dimensions. Additional, detailed study of support models and effective practices is needed as inclusive schooling develops and matures.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this report we have detailed the interactions of inclusive education with other key, critical aspects of effective schooling. We believe that this line of investigation is important as we seek to understand how students with disabilities are included in the culture and operation of a school and the classrooms in it. In each of the chapters we to deepen our knowledge and build on our understandings to develop improved professional development, teacher education, process models of school improvement, and strategies for promoting an effective, inclusive culture within a school. It is our hope that this report, and other writings and presentations, may assist in stimulating more widespread implementation of inclusive schooling and teaching practices.

Key Elements in Building Whole Schools

Whole Schooling Research Project
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Key Elements To Building A WHOLE SCHOOL

Throughout the world, educators are seeking ways to create schools that promote justice and enhance the learning and performance of all children. They are discovering that old patterns of segregating students by race, gender, culture, language, and ability model oppression, reduce effective learning, and prevent the development of relationships among diverse children. Innovative and concerned educators are seeking to create *whole schools* where diversity is valued and children of great differences learn together. This short paper outlines key elements necessary for building inclusive schools. These strategies have been developed out of comprehensive literature review and the Whole Schooling Research Project.

1. **Decision-making and leadership: Leadership, Democracy, and Empowerment.**

A school that seeks to prepare children to be citizens in a democracy must imbed the living and modeling of democracy.

What is critical in this process are these three elements that must be at the foundation of the decision making process of the school.

Leadership. A whole school is first and foremost built on a vision of what is good for children. Staff care more about children than about their place and power in the school bureaucracy, their salary raise this coming year. These are important, of course. The needs of staff are critical. Yet, all is driven by a vision of what helps children.

Democracy. School leadership must be foremost in helping to impel a vision for children ahead. However, all school staff, parents, and children themselves must have a voice in creating an inclusive culture in a school if it is to survive.

Empowerment. Similarly, all in the school must be empowered to take action to make the vision of an inclusive school real. Power must not only be in the 'office' and principal, but all work towards this goal.

2. **Include All students in learning together.**

The school and staff together make a commitment that all students should be welcomed into the school and that teachers and other staff will work to have inclusive classes, heterogeneously grouped where students who are gifted through severely disabled learn, play, and work together.

For this to occur and become part of the culture of the school, the total staff must be committed to this as a value for children, be able to articulate the reasons for their belief, be willing to defend this practice against detractors, and be willing to struggle, learn, and seek answers when it doesn't seem to be working for a particular child.

In most schools, this will mean a shifting special education, gifted, at risk, and other students

from separate classes into general education; identifying the students who are presently in separate special education, gifted, or other schools who would typically attend our school and invite them back; and redesigning the role of specialists to provide support for inclusive teaching (see below).

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Whole schools, and the teachers and staff within them, embrace this diversity of ability and make it part of the design of instruction. Rather than designing instruction around a narrow span of abilities, inclusive teachers design their teaching intentionally allowing for students to be at multiple levels of ability. The idea, however, is not to 'make it easier for those kids who aren't at grade level'. Rather, inclusive teachers . . .

- Design lessons at multiple levels
- That challenge students at their own level (zone of proximal development)
- Provide support and scaffolding so children can push ahead to their own next level of learning.
- Using authentic teaching strategies that engage children in learning via activities that relate to their lives at home and in the community, that connect to the real world
- Engaging the multiple intelligences and learning styles of children so that multiple pathways for learning and demonstrating achievement are avaible.
- Involving students in collaborative, pair or group work where they draw on each other's strengths.

Schools in which teachers teach in this way have few children whose needs are not met. However, since staff are constantly learning, never getting it quite right all the time, there will often be children for whom teaching is not working. Staff then figure a range of *adaptations* to the curriculum, paying attention to what works and how this might be incorporated next time into an overall teaching strategy.

4. Build community and meet the needs of children with behavioral challenges.

For children's minds to work well so that they learn, they must feel safe, secure, cared for. When they don't learning diminishes or ceases. Therefore, building community in the school is critical. This involves many dimensions:

Collaborative, supportive, respectful relationships among staff, parents, the community – study groups, school teams that focus on different issues, team teaching, etc.

Building structures in the classroom among children so they know one another help one another – peer partners, circles of support, peacemakers (a program for conflict resolution where children are taught to resolve conflicts among one another under teacher supervision and guidance), sharing of lives and feelings in talk, writing, the arts, class meetings, and more.

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Supporting teachers in working with students at multiple ability levels, who have emotional and social challenges in their lives is critical. This is particularly important as the shift towards building an inclusive culture in the school is occurring. Teachers who are used to trying to teach at only one level have difficulty figuring out how to teach at multiple levels. Even teachers who do this well sometimes don't know that they do or what is multi-level and what is not.

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1. Remediation or enrichment – the goal is to 'fix' the child or 'enrich' the child's experience, often in pull-out classes or one on one work in the back of the general education class;
2. Adapting – teaching strategies are not questioned and if the ability of the child does not match requirements, curriculum adaptations are developed – eg. different worksheets, less work, more time to do work.
3. Inclusive, multi-level, authentic teaching. Here the support teacher and general education teacher work together to design lessons that engage children at multiple levels.
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In quality schools, we put our focus on #'s 3 and 4. #1 has little place. #2 will be needed little as teachers learn how to teach starting from children's present abilities and strengths. In this way of working we might see:

- The support team meeting weekly together to talk about children with special problems and needs and brainstorm together how to deal with the issue.
- Scheduled meetings at least every two weeks between the general education teacher and the specialists who are providing support in the classroom to develop plans on teaching together and address concerns of specific children.
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we observe the room we would see the teacher or aide working with all the students in the class while assuring that the students with special needs were receiving the help they need. The special education and general education teacher would work together with each taking responsibility for all students.

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We would NOT see.

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In an inclusive school, however, we turn this around by:

- Parents are *immediately* invited to have their children in inclusive classes.
- Meeting with and listening carefully to what parents have to tell us about their children. We seek to understand the child's gifts, strengths, and needs, strategies that work, and interests of the child from the parent.
- Welcoming their child into our classes. We communicate that we want their child in our school and obtain their input for his or her educational plan.
- Invite the parent into the school and class. Make them welcome and a part of the school family and community.
- Insure that they are involved in the full life of the school.

We would NOT see:

- Parents who must fight to have their children included in general education classes in the school.
- Separate PTA for parents of children with special needs.
- Special nights just for children with special needs. They will be fully included in any after school program or activity.
- Teachers sending constant negative notes home to children without balancing this with positive communications.

WHOLE SCHOOLING

Equity and Excellence for Education in a Democratic Society

Orientation Guide for Whole Schooling Renewal

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Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan 48202
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http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/WSC.html

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WHOLE SCHOOLING

Equity and Excellence for Education in a Democratic Society

Whole Schooling is based on key principles and associated practices that synthesize literature on effective learning practices for helping diverse children learn together. Whole Schooling seeks to build a culture in which children are (1) included in a learning community, (2) provided challenging instruction at their own level of ability based on authentic learning activities and their interests, (3) given care and support in an environment where the development of cognitive, social-emotional, and sensory-physical skills are seen as interactive and mutually reinforcing. Whole Schooling focuses on taking children where they are, providing engaging and supportive learning opportunities, and then evaluating the impact on children's growth. Learning builds from the inside-out in Whole Schooling rather than being imposed by predetermined 'standards' of performance. This philosophy insures that children can pursue multiple avenues of excellence without being constrained by reductionistic and narrow views of learning targets. Creativity, humor, interpersonal skills and relationships, art, music, dance, sports are given as much credibility as the traditional subjects of reading, math, and science. Whole Schooling also promotes the interrelatedness of equity and excellence insuring that children of multiple abilities (students with severe disabilities to highly gifted students), cultural and ethnic groups, and students of differing socio-economic status, learn together without being grouped by any of these or other categories.

This document provides resources for those interested in pursuing a Whole Schooling approach to education as a guide to school renewal processes. It includes the following types of information:

P. 3. Principles of Whole Schooling. The principles of Whole Schooling are described.

P. 4 Key elements of Whole Schooling. We describe the principles of Whole Schooling and paint a picture of the key elements of implementing a Whole Schooling approach to learning.

P. 10 Whole Schooling Renewal Process. We outline a framework for working in a school to engage staff, parents, and children in constantly moving towards Whole Schooling.

P. 15 Tools. Several instruments have been developed to date that may be useful.

WHOLE SCHOOLING

The Five Principles

1. **Empowering citizens in a democracy.** The goal of education is to help students learn to function as effective citizens in a democracy. School administration and decision-making, classroom teaching, and interactions with families and the community engage teachers, parents, community members in democratic approaches to learning and organizing the life of the school.

2. **Including all.** All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender & age. We figure ways to get SUPPORT for diverse kids IN our classes rather than sending them out to special classes, clustering, or ability grouping.

3. **Multi-level, authentic teaching.** Teachers design instruction for diverse learners that engages them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities AND develop accommodations and adaptations for learners with diverse needs, interests, and abilities. We move beyond worksheets to engaged methods of teaching – multiple intelligences, multi-level instruction, authentic literacy, problem-based learning, and MORE.

4. **Building community & support of learning.** We use specialized resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support students, parents, and teachers in the general education class. . Special education teachers, Title I specialists, counselors all form a SUPPORT TEAM and provide help in general education classes. Educators seek to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. We might see: peer tutoring programs, peacemaking and conflict resolution, circles of friends, mentoring of older to younger students.

5. **Partnering with families and the community.** Educators build genuine collaboration within the school and with families and the community. The school works to strengthen the community; and provides guidance to engage students, parents, teachers, and others in decision-making and direction of the school. We would see our school as a community center where evening programs are run. We would see parents, community leaders in the school reading to children, mentoring kids, sharing their special skills. We would see teachers knowing the community and classes helping to improve and study their communities as they learn.

Key Elements To Building A WHOLE SCHOOL

Throughout the world, educators are seeking ways to create schools that promote justice and enhance the learning and performance of all children. They are discovering that old patterns of segregating students by race, gender, culture, language, and ability model oppression, reduce effective learning, and prevent the development of relationships among diverse children. Innovative and concerned educators are seeking to create *whole schools* where diversity is valued and children of great differences learn together. This short paper outlines key elements necessary for building inclusive schools. These strategies have been developed out of comprehensive literature review and the Whole Schooling Research Project.

1. Decision-making and leadership.

A school that seeks to prepare children to be citizens in a democracy must imbed the living and modeling of democracy. What is critical in this process are these three elements that must be at the foundation of the decision making process of the school.

Leadership. A whole school is first and foremost built on a vision of what is good for children. Staff care more about children than about their place and power in the school bureaucracy, their salary raise this coming year. These are important, of course. The needs of staff are critical. Yet, all is driven by a vision of what helps children.

Democracy. School leadership must be foremost in helping to impel a vision for children ahead. However, all school staff, parents, and children themselves must have a voice in creating an inclusive culture in a school if it is to survive.

Empowerment. Similarly, all in the school must be empowered to take action to make the vision of an inclusive school real. Power must not only be in the 'office' and principal, but all work towards this goal.

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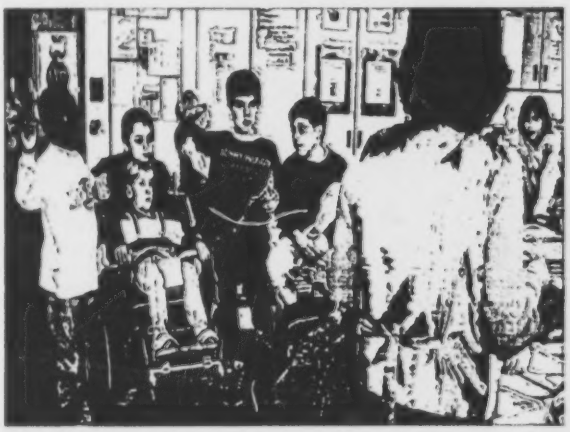

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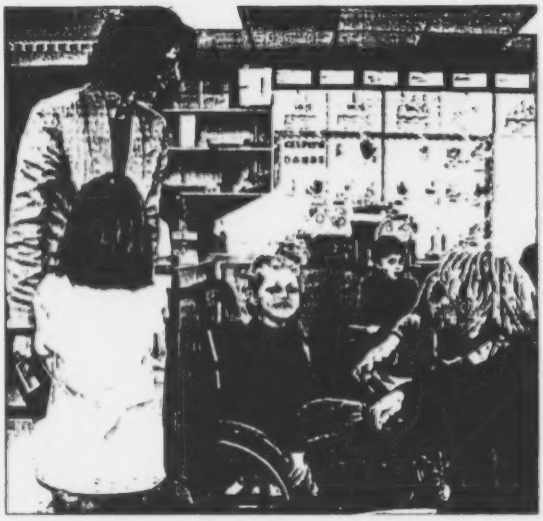

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WHOLE SCHOOLING
RENEWAL PROCESS

Following we describe a process for engaging in change moving towards deep understanding of the principles of Whole Schooling, an analysis of the need of the school, development of an constantly renewing action plan.

Principles of Change

As Whole Schooling has sought to build an inclusive culture of engaged teaching partner schools, we have identified several principles that underlie a successful change process. These will become more explicit during the process of the project.

Inclusive schooling with democracy at the center. Although we expect that schools will start down the road to school reform and improvement beginning in different places and emphasizing one or two of the Five Principles, the commitment to inclusion of students with differences in learning together is non-negotiable. The ultimate goal must be bringing all students with disabilities back to the school, eliminating ability grouping as a preferred instructional method, and working towards inclusive teaching and support strategies that support authentic, multi-level instruction. This commitment is inextricably tied to work that fosters democratic decision-making within classrooms and schools, as well as across schools throughout the network.

Structures based on strengths and needs. Rather than creating a canned prescription for curriculum, study, and governance structures, the Whole Schooling change process seeks to foster deep thinking and subsequent activities arising from the specific context of individual classrooms, schools, and districts. It has already been demonstrated that there is more than one approach to organizing schools, managing classrooms, and designing curriculum that is consistent with the Whole Schooling principles.

Building on capacities, strengths, and gifts. Within and across schools, the key is identification of the capacities of teachers, parents, students, and other school staff and then to use those strengths as sources of learning for others.

Modeling the outcome via the process. If we want schools that are based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, the process of change must be based on these principles as well.

Reflection, thinking, sharing among teachers, staff, and parents. Change cannot be mandated, nor can new skills for teaching and schooling be simply imparted from one person to the other. These changes involve new ways of thinking and new relationships. For substantive change to occur, opportunities are needed for learning, dialogue, sharing, and discussion.

Cross-school, cross-district partnerships. Partnerships among a network of schools working towards similar goals is a critical component, linking teachers, principals, children, and parents across schools. As they have worked together, educators have frequently commented that it is much easier to have substantive discussions about classroom practices when those discussions

allow references to practices in other buildings and thereby avoid any complicating "personality issues" or reluctance to critically analyze the work of close colleagues.

Critical friends and resources from the outside. A 'critical friend' who understands and is committed to the Five Principles of Whole Schooling allows a school to be challenged to identify its strengths and ask questions it might not otherwise ask, thereby finding new perspectives.

Supporting and developing change agents. Ultimately, Whole Schooling is about creating change agents among teachers, staff, parents, and students.

School reform as community organizing. Truly effective change involves pulling together the resources of a community, setting direction together, and building resources for change. As the school moves ahead towards change, barriers and unusual opportunities will present themselves. It is helpful to think of this change and growth process from the vantage point of community organizing – within and across schools, and within individual classrooms as well.

1. Getting started: Engagement.

Connecting a school with a formal school reform model requires a process of engagement that is informed and thoughtful. One or more meetings is held with staff, parents, and students to discuss (1) the principles and practices of the model, (2) the origin of these ideas, (3) implications of implementing the models, and (4) controversies surrounding the specific model or school reform in general. A representative of the Whole Schooling Consortium is present at this meeting to provide information, answer questions, and assist as needed. Presenters provide an overview of the principles of Whole Schooling, associated practices, outline the process of renewal described below, and identify expectations and resources and opportunities that will be part of adopting the Whole Schooling model.

The school will be asked to come to consensus in their adoption of Whole Schooling and agree to:
(1) adopt the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as the guiding framework for school renewal,
(2) develop a relationship with a support office of the Consortium, and
(3) join the Whole Schooling Consortium and local Learning Partnerships – aiming both to benefit and learn from others and to contribute to the total effort.

2. Whole Schooling Renewal Steering Committee.

A group of school staff and parents will guide and coordinate Whole Schooling Renewal efforts. This group will be connected to existing school working groups – governance council, school improvement committee, and so on. Often, a representative group of these larger bodies will function as a planning group or school-level steering committee. This group will meeting monthly and guide the work of the project via the following specific tasks and activities:

- Convene the first meeting at which participants will get to know one another

and establish a working process for the year.
- Discuss and collaboratively develop an implementation plan for Whole Schooling.
- Utilize elements of the Whole Schooling Renewal process at each school including facilitation of a Strengths and Needs Assessment.
- Coordinate cross-school interactions – teacher to teacher sharing and site visits.
- Review the Whole Schooling process, documentation of the process and supporting materials, and provide suggestions for revisions.
- Plan & coordinate the summer conference.
- Review evaluation information and materials and provide input into their interpretation and meaning.

3. Develop a Whole Schooling vision for the school.

The Steering Committee will plan a process involving all stakeholders in each school designed to develop a vision for the school based on the principles of Whole Schooling. This vision will be the central organizing vehicle for moving towards school renewal. We expect that this vision will change, gather depth, shift directions as the school grows and mechanisms to update the formal understanding of the vision will be an integral part of the process. The following strategies and processes will be utilized to develop this vision.

- A meeting of school staff, parents, community members, and children will be held in which information will be shared about the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Following this, small groups will work together to develop ideas about their vision for the school, organized by the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. A recorder will capture the words of each group on chart paper. Cross-group sharing will capture key themes.
- A document will be developed that pulls together and synthesizes the vision of the school.
- The governing committees of the school will review this document and endorse a summary version as a working vision for the school.

4. Whole Schooling Self-Study: *Identify strengths, needs, and priorities.*

Following this setting of the vision, the school will conduct a self-study based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Essentially, school staff will ask these questions: "To what degree are we already implementing each of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling? What are particular strengths and positives? What are areas of concern and need? What do we need to do to make the vision for our school real?" More specific questions will include: "Are there students with disabilities attending other schools who would go to this school if they had no disabilities? If not, where are they? How well are we challenging students by helping them learn together at their own ability levels? What is the sense of community we have in this school?"

The Strengths/Needs Assessment will be revised and updated on an ongoing basis, thus providing an ongoing, interactive learning loop for continuous improvement and renewal. Several tools have been developed to date to assist in this process:
(1) The Whole Schooling Action Guide;

(2) Whole Schooling Self-Assessment Survey; and
(3) Whole Schooling Self-Assessment Rating Scale.

Strategies for completing the initial self-study will be identified by the Steering Committee and may include: (1) written surveys and checklists using these tools; (2) use of the Action Guide as an additional assessment tool; (3) conducting focus groups and dialogues among stakeholders organized around one or more principle; and (4) collection and analysis of school data and documents. We expect to revise these documents and develop other tools as needed in the project.

The following processes will be used to conduct this assessment:

- The Steering Committee will review and select, and/or modify, tools to use to obtain the written input of teachers and parents.
- A process and tools will be developed to engage children in their classes in providing input into the strengths / needs assessment as part of the instructional process.
- An interactive meeting(s) of stakeholders where participants identify perceived strengths and needs related to each principle of Whole Schooling as a group, and then divide into problem-solving groups related to each principle to develop potential solutions and to prioritize key needs, a process field-tested to date in four schools.

5. Develop and implement a plan for change.

The Steering Committee will facilitate the change process with the School Improvement Team.

WHOLE SCHOOLING Renewal MENU FOR CHANGE. The plan will draw from and add to the Whole Schooling Renewal *MENU for Change* that articulates key strategies developed to date. These are described below followed by specific tasks and activities of the design and implementation process.

Action Learning Groups. Teachers, parents, support staff, and administrators may meet as Action Groups focused on particular issues or topics. Such groups provide a sense of empowerment for teachers and other stakeholders, providing a safe place to share innovations and teaching strategies, explore issues, and craft innovations together.

Dialogue sessions for learning, assessment, visioning, and planning. In staff meetings or special meetings that school staff and parents are invited to attend, sessions will be held on specific topics for learning, assessing the success and challenges of particular innovations, and developing updated plans for moving ahead.

Critical friend.. One or more external critical friends will work with the school, developing a relationship, visiting classes, and participating in meetings. The role of this individual is to provide an outside set of eyes, bring critical questions, facilitate organizing of staff to address critical issues, consult with the school principal, and support the development of school leadership among staff.

Workshops. Workshops can provide focused, short-term information and skill development that can be strengthened and

enhanced via other strategies. Resource people in each of the schools and consultants working with the Whole Schooling Consortium will be the primary source of assistance in targeted areas of concern.

School-to-school visits and learning partnerships. A powerful part of the process is linking teachers and parents with one another in order to understand innovations within each other's schools. Visits to schools will allow extended time observing in classrooms and will be targeted at building partnerships to be continued in Action Learning Groups and Dialogue Sessions where particular issues of interest and need will be addressed.

University courses. We will develop strategies by which courses may be offered on school campuses for a network of schools, particularly in conjunction with the work of Action Learning Groups. University courses will be provided that focus on interest areas of school participants as part of the annual Whole Schooling conference.

School retreat. Retreats once per year provide school communities an opportunity for reflection, assessment of successes and challenges, renewal of a vision, and development of ongoing strategies for change. Done well, such retreats offer an important opportunity to strengthen the sense of community among adults in the school.

Whole Schooling Consortium conference. Yearly, members of Consortium school communities will come together to share experiences, hear presentations from national presenters, and discuss next steps plans for the partnership. This will provide an opportunity for reflection and growth.

Involvement of the central school district office. Schools must react to and influence the overall mission, direction, and polices of their own school districts. Therefore, a plan regarding interactions and interventions with the central administration of the school district is an important component of a school renewal process. In the long run, the goal of the Whole Schooling project is facilitation of dissemination through all schools in a district.

Engagement of children in Whole Schooling Renewal. A key component of the Whole Schooling Renewal process is to involve children as integral partners in all aspects of the effort including the following: a heterogeneous group of children across grade levels at Hillside Elementary School will be provided training and support for participation. A group of teachers and support staff will provide specific support to these children in this process; discussions of key questions and concerns (Eg. How can children learn together while working at different ability levels? How can we care about each other in our school?) within and across classes; participation in the strengths, needs assessment and visioning for the school.

WHOLE SCHOOLING
RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

WHOLE SCHOOLING

Strengths and Needs of Our School

School Name **Your Name & Position** (Optional) **Date**

DIRECTIONS Identify specific activities, programs, work we do in our school or your class related to each principle in the left column. In the right column, indicate what you think is needed to improve the school and your class under each principle.

1. EMPOWER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY: Educators work to build a culture of democracy in the school among staff, in classrooms and the school community with students, parents, and community members.

Positive strategies being used — My Class — Needed improvements

The School

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2. INCLUDE ALL. All children learn together across differences of culture; ethnicity; language; academic, emotional, and sensory-physical abilities; gender & age.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3. MULTI-LEVEL, AUTHENTIC INSTRUCTION FOR LEARNERS OF DIVERSE ABILITIES. Teachers design instruction for diverse learners at multiple levels, challenge each child at his or her own level, provide scaffolds and supports and engage them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities. Teachers develop accommodations and adaptations for learners as these are needed.

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4. BUILD COMMUNITY & SUPPORT LEARNING. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. The school uses specialized school and community resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support learning and heterogeous grouping of students. Teachers and staff work proactively to understand, support, and meet the needs of students with behavioral challenges.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5. PARTNER WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY. Educators build genuine collaboration for learning with families, community members, and resource organizations. They seek to engage the school and students in strengthening and improving the community.

Positive strategies being used

My Class

Needed improvements

The School

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OTHER IDEAS OR COMMENTS?

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO _____ BY _____

WHOLE SCHOOLING

Principles and Practices

A Self- Assessment Tool For Educators

DIRECTIONS: This purpose of this document is to provide a simple tool that a school can use to indicate the degree to which it is implementing the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. This tool can be used as a checklist and/or rating scale.

1. Summarize key practices under each of the five principles of Whole Schooling being implemented in your school.

2. Please indicate the estimated percentage of teachers who are using a particular practice in their classroom instruction.

3. Attach any available reports or documentation that illustrate how your school is implementing these principles.

1	2	3	4	5
0% of teachers	25% of teachers	50% of teachers	75% of teachers	100% of teachers

Name of School: _____

Principal: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

The FIVE PRINCIPLES of Whole Schooling

1. Empower citizens in a democracy.
2. Include all.
3. Authentic, multi-level instruction.
4. Build community & support learning.
5. Partner with parents & community.

Comments

_____

1. Empower citizens in a democracy.

_____

_____

_____

1. _____ In classrooms students make choices and work in collaborative working groups in which they ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING.
2. _____ Teachers and the administration MODEL DEMOCRACY in the way school decisions are made with staff, students, families, and the community.
3. _____ The ideas and contributions of ALL STUDENTS ARE VALUED AND ENCOURAGED.
4. _____ CARING AND RESPECT for others is modeled and fostered.
5. _____ Efforts are made to CONNECT STUDENTS with members of other cultures, ethnic groups, and socio-economic status.
6. _____ Students STUDY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY to identify patterns of equity and inequity, power relationships, and cultural patterns.
7. _____ Students are encouraged to identify and study local, state, national, and international issues and to TAKE ACTION to have input in solving problems.
8. _____ Students are provided opportunities for COMMUNITY SERVICE as part of the curriculum.

2. Include all.

_____

_____

_____

9. ____ The school has made a commitment to HETEROGENOUS groupings and is seeking intentionally to move away from separate programs of classrooms for special students to integrated programs..
10. _____ Students with SEVERE DISABILITIES (students who have severe mental retardation, physical disabilities, multiple disabilities, severe emotional impairments) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
11. _____ Students with MODERATE DISABILITIES (students who have educable and trainable mental impairment) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
12. _____Students who have LIMITED HEARING, VISION, AND MOBILITY are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
13. _____ Students with MILD DISABILITIES (students with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, mild emotional impairments) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.

14. _____ Students who are BILINGUAL or have LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING abilities are included in general education where they get assistance and support for language learning.
15. _____ Students served through TITLE I are provided help in the general education classroom.
16. _____ Students who have been identified as GIFTED obtain opportunities for expanded learning in the context of the general education classroom.
17. _____ The school is MULTI-RACIAL and classes are mixed racially in ways that reflect the surrounding community.
18. _____ Classes are MULTI-AGE and allow for interactions and mutual learning among students across age groups.
19. _____PULL-OUT services for students are MINIMAL. Supports are provided using a PUSH-IN approach.

3. Authentic, multi-level instruction.

_____

_____

_____

20. ____ STUDENT INTERESTS are a centerpiece of teaching and the curriculum.
21. ____ ACTIVE, AUTHENTIC LEARNING in which students learn skills through active engagement in meaningful activities is a core instructional philosophy and approach.
22. ____ Teachers use MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES to design instruction.
23. ____ THEMATIC / INTEGRATED instruction is used within and/or across classrooms.
24. ____ Teachers use COOPERATIVE LEARNING.
25. ____ In LITERACY INSTRUCTION strategies are used that give students an opportunity for peer support and authentic use of language.
26. ____ PROJECT BASED learning allows students to work together to struggle with actual materials and community issues.
27. ____ DRAMA, ART, MUSIC, & PHYSICAL EDUCATION is integrated throughout the school curriculum.
28. ____ Instruction is CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY through mentorships, service learning, community projects, and other strategies.
29. ____ The school intentionally seeks to design its learning practices to ACCOMMODATE a wide range of styles, abilities, cultures, and other human differences.
30. ____ ADAPTATIONS & MODIFICATIONS are made in the curriculum expectations and learning activities for specific students.
31. ____ STATE TESTING is kept within proper perspective. The curriculum is centered more in the needs and interests of students than state mandates and testing guidelines.

4. Build community & support learning.

_____

_____

_____

32. ____ Teachers focus on building COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY in the classroom, moving away from competition as the central educational model.
33. ____ PEER SUPPORT is used informally and formally in the school and classroom.
34. ____ Emphasis is placed in helping students develop EMOTIONAL & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.
35. ____ Teachers are given SUPPORT by specialists and the school administration.
36. ____ Teachers engage in TEAM TEACHING, CO-TEACHING, & CONSULTATION with other teachers.
37. ____ A BUILDING BASED SUPPORT TEAM is used to provide support to children, families and teachers.
38. ____ SPECIAL EDUCATION teachers and related services personnel (OT, PT, speech therapist) provide IN-CLASS SUPPORT for students with disabilities.
39. ____ PARAPROFESSIONALS provide assistance in classes.
40. ____ School staff have valuable PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT regarding inclusion and the other principles related to Whole Schooling.

5. Partner with families & community

_____

_____

_____

41. ____ Teachers and the school REACH OUT in many pro-active ways to the school and community.
42. ____ Parents are INVOLVED IN CLASSROOMS providing instruction and support.
43. ____ Parents of students with SPECIAL NEEDS are included in all typical activities of the school.
44. ____ The school is involved in interagency WRAP-AROUND SERVICES or other methods of connecting with outside helping resources for families.
45. ____ The school has special programs to help parents in knowing how to CONNECT HOME LEARNING WITH THE CURRICULUM OF THE SCHOOL.
46. ____ The school functions as a COMMUNITY CENTER and has many programs operating at night and on the weekend.

Revised May 17, 2000 JMP

WHOLE SCHOOLING

Towards A Guide for Action Planning

Michael Peterson
Renaissance Community Press
Wayne State University
217 Education Building
Detroit, Michigan 48202
October 19, 2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHOLE SCHOOLING

1. EMPOWER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY: Educators work to build a culture of democracy in the school among staff, in classrooms and the school community with students, parents, and community members.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• Principal providing leadership and vision while engaging staff, parents, and students in dialogue about important decisions. • Principal facilitates discussion and dialogue among staff, providing support when staff have difficulties. • Informal and formal collaboration among teachers, sharing of ideas, knowledge of each other's practice, discussion at the end of the day. • Staff attend to relationship building and people reframing and summarizing what they hear when people talk. • Staff disagree but also show respect and a willingness to work towards consensus. • Many choices for children – helping to make decisions about the school, daily choices in the classroom – activities on which to work, books to read, the making of rules by students. • Students study controversial social and political issues, take action to make an impact, seek to promote social justice – all as an integral part of the learning process. • Staff work with students and parents to engage in political action to promote positive policies in education and push back against damaging policies. • The school involves parents, university educators, and others in its dynamics of growth and change.	• Principal making major decisions and imposing these on staff with no real dialogue or involvement. • Efforts at change are made by autocratic decree. Principal often seems stressed or angry. • Children with no or few choices, teacher direction, no opportunity to make decisions or have input into class activities. • School and class rules are lists of what not to do which children had no part of making. • Much tension exists among staff, little dialogue. • Principal either resists innovation by teachers or seeks to control such efforts. • Principal takes personnel action against a teacher who participated in a rally against standardized testing. • Staff are told they cannot communicate with parents about their rights regarding inclusive education or issues regarding standardized tests. • Outside involvement is resisted and limited. The school puts forth an image that it is perfect. • Parents must make an appointment a week in advance to visit their child's classroom.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to look at how the school functions as a democracy, its use of power, its dynamics for group, how democracy is supported in the classroom.
2. Investigate the culture of the school. Do a "Democracy Audit" based on observations, interviews, and other data.
3. Involve staff, parents, and children in forums to discuss the idea of democracy and develop an action plan for strengthening democracy in all aspects of the life of the school.
4. Start with 1-3 small projects as 'action learning experiments' – eg. Create ways that children can influence the curriculum of study; create forums for staff decision-making about policies.

2. INCLUDE ALL. All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender & age.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• A range of children – gifted, second language learners, mild to severely disabled – in classes learning together. • Multi-age learning is used frequently – multi-age classes, linking of classes of older and younger students in learning projects, involvement of older people in the community. • Teachers and support staff work to teach so that all children are challenged at their own level of ability, that students with different first language are given support in dual language learning. • School staff is composed of people of different ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and disability. • The school reaches out to insure that all students in its catchment area are welcomed into the school. • The principal and teachers talking about the value of all sorts of diversity and their philosophy of inclusive schooling. • Students in the school talk about what they are learning from having kids with substantial differences in their classes. • Children develop friendships and relationships across their differences.	• Separate classes for special education, gifted, bilingual, at risk. • Clustering of students by category across classes. • Ability grouping in classes. • Special education, gifted, or bilingual separate classes in the school. • 12 year old students with mental retardation 'included' in a 2nd grade class due to their presumed mental abilities. • Students with moderate to severe disabilities at a segregated special education school. • Teachers complaining about kids with special needs in their classes, stating they should go to separate classes. • Kids taunt, call kids with special needs 'dummy' or 'retarded'. • Students from different ethnic groups cluster together; kids with disabilities are pushed away by other students.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to move towards inclusive schooling practices.
2. Conduct an "Inclusion Audit". Determine how children are distributed in the building – special classes, ability grouping in classes, etc. Identify children who are sent to special programs before they get an opportunity to come to the school.
3. Dialogue with staff, parents, and children about segregated versus inclusive education. Develop a commitment to become an inclusive school.
4. Engage in learning about inclusive schooling and teaching through conferences, visits to other schools.
5. Develop an action plan. Start small. Strategies may include (depending upon the situation of the school).
   - Place children in classes heterogeneously intentionally, seeking to balance different characteristics of children.
   - Move children out of separate classes into general education classes. Re-design the roles of special teachers to support staff *or* add classes and reduce the overall class size.
   - Seek out parents of children who have been sent to segregated, special schools and invite them to consider enrolling their children in the school.
   - Teachers obtain training, as needed, and develop strategies to teach authentically at multiple levels of ability.

3. AUTHENTIC, MULTI-LEVEL INSTRUCTION FOR LEARNERS OF DIVERSE ABILITIES. Teachers design instruction for diverse learners at multiple levels, challenge each child at his or her own level, provide scaffolds and supports and engage them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities. Teachers develop accommodations and adaptations for learners as these are needed.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• The experiences and interests of children are used to direct and expand learning activities. The state curriculum and standardized tests are considered on source of focus for learning goals and activities. • Students involved in projects, collaborative learning activities. • Evidence of multiple modalities – words, art, music. • Children are involved in real, meaningful work – writing letters to real people, stories of their experiences, reflections on a book they have read, studying social problems in the community. • Learning activities allow a place for children to be challenged at multiple levels while they work together. • Teams of teachers work together across disciplines – literacy, science, social studies, art – to link learning around key themes. • Student produced work is everywhere – on the walls, strung from the ceiling, in the hall. Few commercial materials are evident. • A quiet hum with periodic rush of excitement pervades the classroom. Kids move around as they need and may be working on tables, under desks, on the floor, in the hall. • Visitors are expected and welcome. Students easily talk with visitors explaining what they are doing. • Student sit at tables with small groups or desks are clustered together with students facing one another. • Students may be working on different projects or activities simultaneously. • Teacher walks all over the room helping students, may be hard to find when you come in the room.	• Much pressure and emphasis on standardized tests. It becomes the thrust of the curriculum with little to no room for individual student interests. • Teachers instructing mostly through lecture, textbook or basal, and audio-visuals. • Student desks in rows facing forward. They are expected to stay seated and must ask permission to stand or move around. • Student work that mostly involves completing worksheets of isolated skills and facts. • Walls rather bare except for rules and teacher or commercially made materials. • Children's work displayed is all the same – multiple drawings of a tree and a house, worksheets, etc. • Each subject is rigidly separated and there is little connection between subjects. • Most talk involves teacher to student and student to teacher interactions. Little student to student talk is allowed. • Learning activities are targeted at one level. Children who do not fit are excluded, bored, or cannot keep up. • All students must work on the same activity at the same time. • The teacher is at the front of the class, spends a lot of time keeping kids in their seats and asking them to be quiet and work.

Action Steps

1. A working group or groups is convened to look at curriculum and instruction in the school.
2. The group conducts a Teaching Audit regarding how instruction occurs across the building.
3. The working group identifies areas of need and improvement and these are used to develop specific action steps. These might include:
4. Identification of innovations to create within the school – eg. Multi-age classes, reading and writing workshop, interdisciplinary teaching, strategies for multi-level teaching.
5. Identifying teachers interested in different innovations to work together as a 'Learning Innovation Team' (LIT). Teachers work in collaborative implementation and study groups.

4. BUILD COMMUNITY & SUPPORT LEARNING. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. The school uses specialized school and community resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support learning and heterogeneous grouping of students. Teachers and staff work proactively to understand, support, and meet the needs of students with behavioral challenges.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• A philosophy of building community in the school and classrooms that pervades the building. • Welcoming, inviting atmosphere – bright posters, art and writing work of students in the halls, pleasant interactions among staff. • School staff work to build a caring community with each other. They work together in study groups, flexible teaming arrangements. Staff enjoy being with one another. • Kids interacting with one another constantly in helping ways – reading as partners, hugging or talking if a child is emotionally upset. • A teacher and support staff facilitating a circle of friends for a child with many needs and challenges. 2/3 of the class volunteer to help the student when invited. • Teachers intentionally work in their classrooms to promote community, talk with children about this, build structures to support this – peer partners, cooperative learning, class meetings, circles of support. • Support staff – special education, at risk, bilingual, gifted, speech therapy, social work – are available to work with teachers *in the class* to provide assistance in designing instruction for children with diverse abilities and needs. • Support staff function as a flexible, collegial team to provide in-class help to teachers – team support for instruction, aiding in facilitating students circles of support, etc. • A building team is available to confer with teachers about students having difficulties and to support both teacher and student. • When children have behavioral or emotional problems, teachers and other school staff struggle to understand what need the child has that is not being met and to help the child have more positive alternatives for meeting that need. • Conflict resolution programs help students learn how to solve difficulties that occur. This occurs throughout the school involving teachers in supporting students. • A student support team works proactively with the student and provides support to the teacher. • Teachers and the school resists and works against the administration of Ritalin and other medications to children. • Staff look at children's strengths and resist use of psychiatric labels, rather looking at the needs of the child, his / her school and home environment, and ways to build on strengths and meet needs.	• Major emphasis placed on following the 'rules' for staff, students, parents. • An adversarial relationship exists between staff and administration; cliques among staff abound. • School support staff pull children out of class to get help. They work in parallel with little communication. • Students are sent to special classes – special education, bilingual, gifted – for special help pulling them out of the classroom community. • Aides for students with special needs sit with them in the back of the room and work on a parallel curriculum. • The school and teachers use elaborate systems of rewards and punishments – stickers, gold stars, demerits. • Many students in the school identified with behavioral problems being sent to the office, not allowed to go on recess or lunch break. • School uses a 'zero tolerance' policy and frequently suspends children for minor infractions. • Staff are angry and afraid of students. The principal and teachers are heard frequently yelling at students. • Either the school has no support for teachers in dealing with students having behavioral problems or specialists see their role primarily as referring a child to a separate program for emotional disturbance. • When children have problems they are quickly labeled as ADD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or some other psychiatric label that identifies the problem as one within the child and reduces efforts to help a child have needs met. • 10% of more children in the school take Ritalin or some similar drug. Parents are pressured to put their children on such medications.

Action Steps

1. *Develop a Working Group to look at issues of community, behavioral and emotional needs, and support.*
2. Conduct a Community and Emotional Needs Audit. Observe, interview, focus groups, statistics on detentions, suspensions, etc.
3. Develop a plan for trying innovations to build community and strengthen proactive ways to respond to the emotional and behavioral needs of children and provide strengthened support for teachers. Depending upon specific needs of the school, these might include:
   - Develop a plan to increase support for teachers and build a sense of community among staff – reading together about community, looking at support and collaboration mechanisms – team teaching.
   - Develop strategies to strengthen team work of support staff as a coordinated, flexible team with one another and with general education teachers. For example, identify thematic unit teacher might want to do and engage a few teachers and support staff team members in planning this collaboratively.
   - Identify small ways to strengthen a sense of community and welcome in the building – greetings to children as they come in the door, greetings to visitors, children's work displayed throughout the building.
   - Develop circles of support for children with high needs based on their interest. Involve teachers and support staff in assisting children learn how to help and function as a circle of support.
   - Obtain training and develop new skills in looking at the behavioral challenges of children – see these as needs, do functional assessments, have options available for meeting needs.
   - Engage a local physician who is concerned about the over-medication of children as a consultation to work with staff and parents in finding alternatives to use of drugs to control behaviors.

5. PARTNER WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY. Educators build genuine collaboration for learning with families, community members, and resource organizations. They seek to engage the school and students in strengthening and improving the community.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• Parents and community members in the school and classrooms frequently, working in classrooms in meaningful teaching activities. • Teachers have close relationships with many parents. • Parents and community members are part of the school improvement team and other working groups and are involved in making major decisions regarding governance of the school. • School staff reach out and connect to community resources. They know people in the community. • Much student learning goes on in projects in the local neighborhood and community. This goes far beyond the traditional field trip where students are engaged in real activities as a centerpiece of their learning. Students study local social issues and develop strategies for their solution. • The school involves children and staff, as part of their learning, in contributing to efforts to strengthen the community. • Many community individuals and organizations are involved in instructional and after school programs in the school – artists, musicians, violence prevention, mental health, Big Brothers – Big Sisters. • The school acts as a community center, is open most evenings filled with activities for children and parents. • The school partners with other schools and external partners to learn and grow and support the learning of others.. • The school collaborates with other agencies to provide a full range of services, including wrap-around services for families with great challenges	• Parents and community members feel unwelcome in the school. • The school is usually locked and closes it's doors at 4:00 PM on most days. • Parents must fight to have their students with special needs considered for general education classes. • School staff have an us / them attitude about parents and the community. • Few school staff know the community at all – they live elsewhere and drive in and out daily. • Efforts to reach out to parents are due mostly to pressures from the bureaucracy and involve trying to give parents 'rewards' for coming to a meeting. • Parents receive much negative feedback from the school about their children. The teachers don't seem to care. • Few outside organizations are involved in the school. Those that are come in for one day, short term 'events' that impact on the ongoing life of the school in limited ways. • Students do not learn in the community. Many school rules actually prevent teachers from taking children into the neighborhood for learning. • The school attempts to get resources from community agencies but does not engage in any real partnerships so as to protect its 'turf'.

Action Steps

1. *Develop a working group to strengthen parents and community partnerships.*
2. Conduct a Parent and Community Partnership Audit. Find out how parents and community members are interacting in classes. Conduct interviews and focus groups to get perceptions of the school and teachers by parents. Use Epstein's framework in this process.
3. Conduct a Neighborhood and Community Map. Identify resources in the area based on John Mcknight's community mapping process. Involve the students in this as part of their learning activities.
4. Develop a plan for strengthening parent and community partnerships. These may vary depending upon the situation of the school.

WHOLE SCHOOLING:

Principles and Practices

A Self- Assessment Tool For Educators

DIRECTIONS: This purpose of this document is to provide a simple tool that a school can usc to indicate the degree to which it is implementing the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. This tool can be used as a checklist and/or rating scale.

1. Summarize key practices under each of the five principles of Whole Schooling being implemented in your school.

2. Please indicate the estimated percentage of teachers who are using a particular practice in their classroom instruction.

3. Attach any available reports or documentation that illustrate how your school is implementing these principles.

1 2 3 4 5
0% of teachers 25% of teachers 50% of teachers 75% of teachers 100% of teachers

Name of School: _____

Principal: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

1. Empower citizens in a democracy.

_____

_____

_____

1.1 _____ In classrooms students make choices and work in collaborative working groups in which they ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING.
1.2 _____ Teachers and the administration MODEL DEMOCRACY in the way school decisions are made with staff, students, families, and the community.
1.3 _____ The ideas and contributions of ALL STUDENTS ARE VALUED AND ENCOURAGED.
1.4 _____ CARING AND RESPECT for others is modeled and fostered.
1.5 _____ Efforts are made to CONNECT STUDENTS with members of other cultures, ethnic groups, and socio-economic status.
1.6 _____ Students STUDY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY to identify patterns of equity and inequity, power relationships, and cultural patterns.
1.7 _____ Students are encouraged to identify and study local, state, national, and international issues and to TAKE ACTION to have input in solving problems.
1.8 _____ Students are provided opportunities for COMMUNITY SERVICE as part of the curriculum.

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2. Include all.

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2.1 ____ The school has made a commitment to HETEROGENOUS groupings and is seeking intentionally to move away from separate programs of classrooms for special students to integrated programs..
2.2 _____ Students with SEVERE DISABILITIES (students who have severe mental retardation, physical disabilities, multiple disabilities, severe emotional impairments) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
2.3 _____ Students with MODERATE DISABILITIES (students who have educable and trainable mental impairment) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
2.4 _____Students who have LIMITED HEARING, VISION, AND MOBILITY are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
2.5 _____ Students with MILD DISABILITIES (students with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, mild emotional impairments) are included in general education classes with staff support and resources.
2.6 _____ Students who are BILINGUAL or have LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING abilities are included in general education where they get assistance and support for language learning.
2.7 _____ Students served through TITLE I are provided help in the general education classroom.
2.8 _____ Students who have been identified as GIFTED obtain opportunities for expanded learning in the context of the general education classroom.
2.9 _____ The school is MULTI-RACIAL and classes are mixed racially in ways that reflect the surrounding community.
2.10 _____ Classes are MULTI-AGE and allow for interactions and mutual learning among students across age groups.
2.11 _____PULL-OUT services for students are MINIMAL. Supports are provided using a PUSH-IN approach.

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3. Teach and adapt for diversity.

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3.1 ____ The school intentionally seeks to design its learning practices to ACCOMMODATE a wide range of styles, abilities, cultures, and other human differences.
3.2 ____ ACTIVE, AUTHENTIC LEARNING in which students learn skills through active engagement in meaningful activities is a core instructional philosophy and approach.
3.3 ____ Teachers use MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES to design instruction.
3.4 ____ THEMATIC / INTEGRATED instruction is used within and/or across classrooms.
3.5 ____ Teachers use COOPERATIVE LEARNING.
3.6 ____ In LITERACY INSTRUCTION strategies are used that give students an opportunity for peer support and authentic use of language.
3.7 ____ PROJECT BASED learning allows students to work together to struggle with actual materials and community issues.
3.8 ____ DRAMA, ART, MUSIC, & PHYSICAL EDUCATION is integrated throughout the school curriculum.
3.9 ____ Instruction is CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY through mentorships, service learning, community projects, and other strategies.
3.10 ____ ADAPTATIONS & MODIFICATIONS are made in the curriculum expectations and learning activities for specific students.
3.11 ____ Students with disabilities are included in DISTRICT AND STATE-LEVEL TESTING.

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4. Build community & support learning.

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4.1 ____ Teachers focus on building COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY in the classroom, moving away from competition as the central educational model.
4.2 ____ PEER SUPPORT is used informally and formally in the school and classroom.
4.3 ____ Emphasis is placed in helping students develop EMOTIONAL & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.
4.4 ____ Teachers are given SUPPORT by specialists and the school administration.
4.5 ____ Teachers engage in TEAM TEACHING, CO-TEACHING, & CONSULTATION with other teachers.
4.6 ____ A BUILDING BASED SUPPORT TEAM is used to provide support to children, families and teachers.
4.7 ____ SPECIAL EDUCATION teachers and related services personnel (OT, PT, speech therapist) provide IN-CLASS SUPPORT for students with disabilities.
4.8 ____ PARAPROFESSIONALS provide assistance in classes.
4.10 ____ School staff have valuable PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT regarding inclusion and the other principles related to Whole Schooling.

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5. **Partner with families & community**

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5.1 ____ Teachers and the school REACH OUT in many pro-active ways to the school and community.
5.2 ____ Parents are INVOLVED IN CLASSROOMS providing instruction and support.
5.3 ____ Parents of students with SPECIAL NEEDS are included in all typical activities of the school.
5.4 ____ The school is involved in interagency WRAP-AROUND SERVICES or other methods of connecting with outside helping resources for families.
5.5 ____ The school has special programs to help parents in knowing how to CONNECT HOME LEARNING WITH THE CURRICULUM OF THE SCHOOL.
5.6 ____ The school functions as a COMMUNITY CENTER and has many programs operating at night and on the weekend.

WHOLE SCHOOLING

Education for a Democratic Society

Towards A Guide for Action Planning

Michael Peterson
Renaissance Community Press
Wayne State University
217 Education Building
Detroit, Michigan 48202
October 19, 2000

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WHOLE SCHOOLING

Education for a Democratic Society

1. EMPOWER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY: Educators work to build a culture of democracy in the school among staff, in classrooms and the school community with students, parents, and community members.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• Principal providing leadership and vision while engaging staff, parents, and students in dialogue about important decisions. • Principal facilitates discussion and dialogue among staff, providing support when staff have difficulties. • Informal and formal collaboration among teachers, sharing of ideas, knowledge of each other's practice, discussion at the end of the day. • Staff attend to relationship building and people reframing and summarizing what they hear when people talk. • Staff disagree but also show respect and a willingness to work towards consensus. • Many choices for children – helping to make decisions about the school, daily choices in the classroom – activities on which to work, books to read, the making of rules by students. • Students study controversial social and political issues, take action to make an impact, seek to promote social justice – all as an integral part of the learning process. • Staff work with students and parents to engage in political action to promote positive policies in education and push back against damaging policies. • The school involves parents, university educators, and others in its dynamics of growth and change.	• Principal making major decisions and imposing these on staff with no real dialogue or involvement. • Efforts at change are made by autocratic decree. Principal often seems stressed or angry. • Children with no or few choices, teacher direction, no opportunity to make decisions or have input into class activities. • School and class rules are lists of what not to do which children had no part of making. • Much tension exists among staff, little dialogue. • Principal either resists innovation by teachers or seeks to control such efforts. • Principal takes personnel action against a teacher who participated in a rally against standardized testing. • Staff are told they cannot communicate with parents about their rights regarding inclusive education or issues regarding standardized tests. • Outside involvement is resisted and limited. The school puts forth an image that it is perfect. • Parents must make an appointment a week in advance to visit their child's classroom.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to look at how the school functions as a democracy, its use of power, its dynamics for group, how democracy is supported in the classroom.
2. Investigate the culture of the school. Do a "Democracy Audit" based on observations, interviews, and other data.
3. Involve staff, parents, and children in forums to discuss the idea of democracy and develop an action plan for strengthening democracy in all aspects of the life of the school.
4. Start with 1-3 small projects as 'action learning experiments' – eg. Create ways that children can influence the curriculum of study; create forums for staff decision-making about policies.

2. INCLUDE ALL. All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender & age.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• A range of children – gifted, second language learners, mild to severely disabled – in classes learning together. • Multi-age learning is used frequently – multi-age classes, linking of classes of older and younger students in learning projects, involvement of older people in the community. • Teachers and support staff work to teach so that all children are challenged at their own level of ability, that students with different first language are given support in dual language learning. • School staff is composed of people of different ethnic groups, socio-economic status, and disability. • The school reaches out to insure that all students in its catchment area are welcomed into the school. • The principal and teachers talking about the value of all sorts of diversity and their philosophy of inclusive schooling. • Students in the school talk about what they are learning from having kids with substantial differences in their classes. • Children develop friendships and relationships across their differences.	• Separate classes for special education, gifted, bilingual, at risk. • Clustering of students by category across classes. • Ability grouping in classes. • Special education, gifted, or bilingual separate classes in the school. • 12 year old students with mental retardation 'included' in a 2nd grade class due to their presumed mental abilities. • Students with moderate to severe disabilities at a segregated special education school. • Teachers complaining about kids with special needs in their classes, stating they should go to separate classes. • Kids taunt, call kids with special needs 'dummy' or 'retarded'. • Students from different ethnic groups cluster together; kids with disabilities are pushed away by other students.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to move towards inclusive schooling practices.
2. Conduct an "Inclusion Audit". Determine how children are distributed in the building – special classes, ability grouping in classes, etc. Identify children who are sent to special programs before they get an opportunity to come to the school.
3. Dialogue with staff, parents, and children about segregated versus inclusive education. Develop a commitment to become an inclusive school.
4. Engage in learning about inclusive schooling and teaching through conferences, visits to other schools.
5. Develop an action plan. Start small. Strategies may include (depending upon the situation of the school).
    - Place children in classes heterogeneously intentionally, seeking to balance different characteristics of children.
    - Move children out of separate classes into general education classes. Re-design the roles of special teachers to support staff *or* add classes and reduce the overall class size.
    - Seek out parents of children who have been sent to segregated, special schools and invite them to consider enrolling their children in the school.
    - Teachers obtain training, as needed, and develop strategies to teach authentically at multiple levels of ability.

3. MULTI-LEVEL, AUTHENTIC INSTRUCTION FOR LEARNERS OF DIVERSE ABILITIES.

Teachers design instruction for diverse learners at multiple levels, challenge each child at his or her own level, provide scaffolds and supports and engage them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities. Teachers develop accommodations and adaptations for learners as these are needed.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• The experiences and interests of children are used to direct and expand learning activities. The state curriculum and standardized tests are considered on source of focus for learning goals and activities. • Students involved in projects, collaborative learning activities. • Evidence of multiple modalities – words, art, music. • Children are involved in real, meaningful work – writing letters to real people, stories of their experiences, reflections on a book they have read, studying social problems in the community. • Learning activities allow a place for children to be challenged at multiple levels while they work together. • Teams of teachers work together across disciplines – literacy, science, social studies, art – to link learning around key themes. • Student produced work is everywhere – on the walls, strung from the ceiling, in the hall. Few commercial materials are evident. • A quiet hum with periodic rush of excitement pervades the classroom. Kids move around as they need and may be working on tables, under desks, on the floor, in the hall. • Visitors are expected and welcome. Students easily talk with visitors explaining what they are doing. • Student sit at tables with small groups or desks are clustered together with students facing one another. • Students may be working on different projects or activities simultaneously. • Teacher walks all over the room helping students, may be hard to find when you come in the room.	• Much pressure and emphasis on standardized tests. It becomes the thrust of the curriculum with little to no room for individual student interests. • Teachers instructing mostly through lecture, textbook or basal, and audio-visuals. • Student desks in rows facing forward. They are expected to stay seated and must ask permission to stand or move around. • Student work that mostly involves completing worksheets of isolated skills and facts. • Walls rather bare except for rules and teacher or commercially made materials. • Children's work displayed is all the same – multiple drawings of a tree and a house, worksheets, etc. • Each subject is rigidly separated and there is little connection between subjects. • Most talk involves teacher to student and student to teacher interactions. Little student to student talk is allowed. • Learning activities are targeted at one level. Children who do not fit are excluded, bored, or cannot keep up. • All students must work on the same activity at the same time. • The teacher is at the front of the class, spends a lot of time keeping kids in their seats and asking them to be quiet and work.

Action Steps

1. A working group or groups is convened to look at curriculum and instruction in the school.
2. The group conducts a Teaching Audit regarding how instruction occurs across the building.
3. The working group identifies areas of need and improvement and these are used to develop specific action steps. These might include:
   - Identification of innovations to create within the school – eg. Multi-age classes, reading and writing workshop, interdisciplinary teaching, strategies for multi-level teaching.
   - Identifying teachers interested in different innovations to work together as a 'Learning Innovation Team' (LIT). Teachers work in collaborative implementation and study groups.

4. BUILD COMMUNITY & SUPPORT LEARNING. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school. The school uses specialized school and community resources (special education, title I, gifted education) to support learning and heterogeneous grouping of students. Teachers and staff work proactively to understand, support, and meet the needs of students with behavioral challenges.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• A philosophy of building community in the school and classrooms that pervades the building. • Welcoming, inviting atmosphere – bright posters, art and writing work of students in the halls, pleasant interactions among staff. • School staff work to build a caring community with each other. They work together in study groups, flexible teaming arrangements. Staff enjoy being with one another. • Kids interacting with one another constantly in helping ways – reading as partners, hugging or talking if a child is emotionally upset. • A teacher and support staff facilitating a circle of friends for a child with many needs and challenges. 2/3 of the class volunteer to help the student when invited. • Teachers intentionally work in their classrooms to promote community, talk with children about this, build structures to support this – peer partners, cooperative learning, class meetings, circles of support. • Support staff – special education, at risk, bilingual, gifted, speech therapy, social work – are available to work with teachers *in the class* to provide assistance in designing instruction for children with diverse abilities and needs. • Support staff function as a flexible, collegial team to provide in-class help to teachers – team support for instruction, aiding in facilitating students circles of support, etc. • A building team is available to confer with teachers about students having difficulties and to support both teacher and student. • When children have behavioral or emotional problems, teachers and other school staff struggle to understand what need the child has that is not being met and to help the child have more positive alternatives for meeting that need. • Conflict resolution programs help students learn how to solve difficulties that occur. This occurs throughout the school involving teachers in supporting students. • A student support team works proactively with the student and provides support to the teacher. • Teachers and the school resists and works against the administration of Ritalin and other medications to children. • Staff look at children's strengths and resist use of psychiatric labels, rather looking at the needs of the child, his / her school and home environment, and ways to build on strengths and meet needs.	• Major emphasis placed on following the 'rules' for staff, students, parents. • An adversarial relationship exists between staff and administration; cliques among staff abound. • School support staff pull children out of class to get help. They work in parallel with little communication. • Students are sent to special classes – special education, biligual, gifted – for special help pulling them out of the classroom community. • Aides for students with special needs sit with them in the back of the room and work on a parallel curriculum. • The school and teachers used elaborate systems of rewards and punishments – stickers, gold stars, demerits. • Many students in the school identified with behavioral problems being sent to the office, not allowed to go on recess or lunch break. • School uses a 'zero tolerance' policy and frequently suspends children for minor infractions. • Staff are angry and afraid of students. The principal and teachers are heard frequently yelling at students. • Either the school has no support for teachers in dealing with students having behavioral problems or specialists see their role primarily as referring a child to a separate program for emotional disturbance. • When children have problems they are quickly labeled as ADD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or some other psychiatric label that identifies the problem as one within the child and reduces efforts to help a child have needs met. • 10% of more children in the school take Ritalin or some similar drug. Parents are pressured to put their children on such medications.

Action Steps

1. Develop a Working Group to look at issues of community, behavioral and emotional needs, and support.
2. Conduct a Community and Emotional Needs Audit. Observe, interview, focus groups, statistics on detentions, suspensions, etc.

3. Develop a plan for trying innovations to build community and strengthen proactive ways to respond to the emotional and behavioral needs of children and provide strengthened support for teachers. Depending upon specific needs of the school, these might include:
   - Develop a plan to increase support for teachers and build a sense of community among staff – reading together about community, looking at support and collaboration mechanisms – team teaching.
   - Develop strategies to strengthen team work of support staff as a coordinated, flexible team with one another and with general education teachers. For example, identify thematic unit teacher might want to do and engage a few teachers and support staff team members in planning this collaboratively.
   - Identify small ways to strengthen a sense of community and welcome in the building – greetings to children as they come in the door, greetings to visitors, children's work displayed throughout the building.
   - Develop circles of support for children with high needs based on their interest. Involve teachers and support staff in assisting children learn how to help and function as a circle of support.
   - Obtain training and develop new skills in looking at the behavioral challenges of children – see these as needs, do functional assessments, have options available for meeting needs.
   - Engage a local physician who is concerned about the over-medication of children as a consultation to work with staff and parents in finding alternatives to use of drugs to control behaviors.

5. PARTNER WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY. Educators build genuine collaboration for learning with families, community members, and resource organizations. They seek to engage the school and students in strengthening and improving the community.

We would *expect* to see. . .	We would hope *not* to see . . .
• Parents and community members in the school and classrooms frequently, working in classrooms in meaningful teaching activities. • Teachers have close relationships with many parents. • Parents and community members are part of the school improvement team and other working groups and are involved in making major decisions regarding governance of the school. • School staff reach out and connect to community resources. They know people in the community. • Much student learning goes on in projects in the local neighborhood and community. This goes far beyond the traditional field trip where students are engaged in real activities as a centerpiece of their learning. Students study local social issues and develop strategies for their solution. • The school involves children and staff, as part of their learning, in contributing to efforts to strengthen the community. • Many community individuals and organizations are involved in instructional and after school programs in the school – artists, musicians, violence prevention, mental health, Big Brothers – Big Sisters. • The school acts as a community center, is open most evenings filled with activities for children and parents. • The school partners with other schools and external partners to learn and grow and support the learning of others. • The school collaborates with other agencies to provide a full range of services, including wrap-around services for families with great challenges.	• Parents and community members feel unwelcome in the school. • The school is usually locked and closes it's doors at 4:00 PM on most days. • Parents must fight to have their students with special needs considered for general education classes. • School staff have an us / them attitude about parents and the community. • Few school staff know the community at all – they live elsewhere and drive in and out daily. • Efforts to reach out to parents are due mostly to pressures from the bureaucracy and involve trying to give parents 'rewards' for coming to a meeting. • Parents receive much negative feedback from the school about their children. The teachers don't seem to care. • Few outside organizations are involved in the school. Those that are come in for one day, short term 'events' that impact on the ongoing life of the school in limited ways. • Students do not learn in the community. Many school rules actually prevent teachers from taking children into the neighborhood for learning. • The school attempts to get resources from community agencies but does not engage in any real partnerships so as to protect its 'turf'.

Action Steps

1. Develop a working group to strengthen parents and community partnerships.
2. Conduct a Parent and Community Partnership Audit. Find out how parents and community members are interacting in classes. Conduct interviews and focus groups to get perceptions of the school and teachers by parents. Use Epstein's framework in this process.
3. Conduct a Neighborhood and Community Map. Identify resources in the area based on John Mcknight's community mapping process. Involve the students in this as part of their learning activities.
4. Develop a plan for strengthening parent and community partnerships. These may vary depending upon the situation of the school.

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